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ABSTRACT

Virginia has 36 criminal justice training academies, including 10 regional academies. The academies conduct entry-level, inservice, and specialized training for law enforcement officers, jailers, and other criminal justice personnel. In 1998, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) was directed to review the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice training and develop methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice personnel. JLARC staff interviewed approximately 60 Department of Criminal Justice Services staff, conducted mail surveys of regional criminal justice academy graduates and field training officers, and visited all 10 regional academies. The following were among the key findings: (1) localities provide the bulk of funding for regional academies; (2) training standards for entry-level law enforcement personnel are extensive and specific; (3) most instructors are volunteers; (4) testing policies are weak; (5) a standardized law enforcement test should be considered; (6) a driver training facility is needed; and (7) field training and inservice training should be strengthened. (Seventeen tables/figures/exhibits are included. The following items are appended: text of Virginia House Joint Resolution No. 285; academy participation and officer population by criminal justice agency; the JLARC survey instruments and tallied responses; and the response from Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice Services.) (MN)

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JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMISSION
OF THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Review of Regional Criminal Justice Training Academies

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REPORT OF THE
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
AND REVIEW COMMISSION

REVIEW OF REGIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING ACADEMIES

TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 28

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1999

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Director
Philip A. Leone

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Preface

House Joint Resolution 285, approved by the 1998 General Assembly, directed JLARC to study the regional criminal justice training academies. The review was to examine methods of:

- developing and measuring the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training, and

- developing quantitative methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry-level training.

The study focused on local law enforcement officers, since they constitute the largest group of criminal justice officers.

Virginia has extensive entry-level training requirements for law enforcement officers. These requirements will increase in 1999, reflecting a recognition that more time needs to be spent on the fundamentals of the profession. State funding for regional criminal justice training will double in the current fiscal year, due to a special fee attached to court convictions.

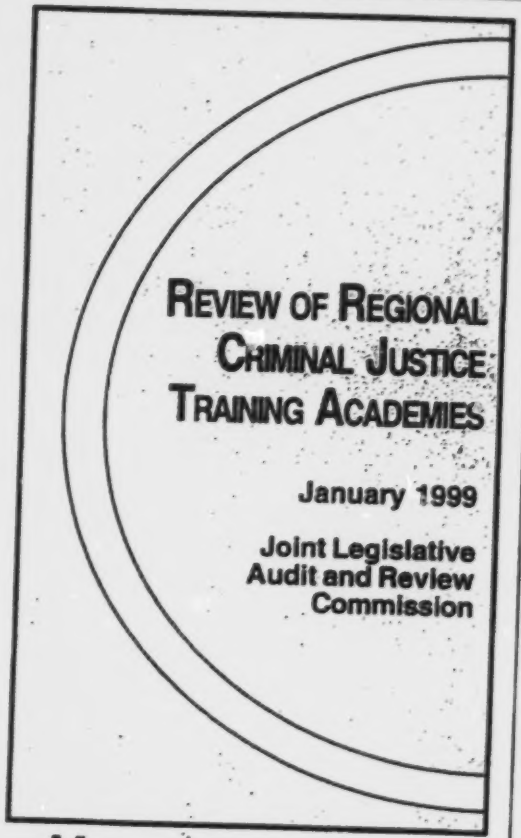
As the State agency responsible for overseeing criminal justice training, the Department of Criminal Justice Services has established a reasonable framework by requiring entry-level officers to demonstrate their mastery of the fundamentals of their profession. However, there are several aspects of training which need improvement. Criminal justice instructors should have to demonstrate their knowledge and skill level prior to being certified to teach. A standard test for certification would provide a quantitative method for measuring competency and would ensure that all law enforcement officers statewide master the essentials of the curriculum. A determination should be made about whether there are enough regional training academies, and whether it may be time to curb extensive switching between the regional academies by local agencies. A study of the feasibility of developing a driver training facility at Ft. Pickett or other suitable location is also needed.

On behalf of the JLARC staff, I would like to thank the staff from the Department of Criminal Justice Services and from the regional criminal justice training academies for their cooperation and assistance during the course of this study.

Philip A. Leone
Director

January 5, 1999

JLARC Report Summary



House Joint Resolution 285, passed by the 1998 General Assembly, directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to review the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training and to develop methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice. Virginia has 36 criminal justice training academies, ten of which are regional academies (see graphic next page). The academies conduct training for law enforcement and jailers as well as other criminal justice personnel. Academies provide entry-level, in-service, and specialized training to their member agencies, and to other organizations by contract or special arrangements. The ten regional academies are supported by groups of localities and are partly State funded. These regional academies provide training to 91 percent of Virginia's 363 criminal justice agencies, representing 55 percent of the criminal justice officers in the Commonwealth. Most of the larger cities and suburban counties operate their own independent criminal justice training academies, which HJR 285 excluded from this review.

JLARC staff found that the regional training academies meet the State's minimum training requirements for entry level law enforcement, although new officers have widely varying levels of exposure to core law enforcement topics. While standards for the core law enforcement curriculum will increase in 1999, it is likely that the consistency of what new officers learn will continue to vary dramatically. This is because entry level training varies widely in length and content, and because regional academies depend heavily on volunteer instructors and donated services.

State standards are extensive and specific, but training academies rely almost completely on volunteer instructors, and receive no guidance in testing whether students have mastered the core curriculum. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) permits an unlimited number of re-tests for a student who misses a test question, and most regional academies allow a student three tries to get a correct answer. DCJS should correct this weak approach to testing by developing a standardized test for law enforcement officer certification. A statewide test would provide a means to quantify the knowledge, skills, and abilities of entry level officers. Further, regional academies tend to have an inconsistent approach to keeping instructors current. Better support for ad-

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Criminal Justice Training Academies

Regional Academies:

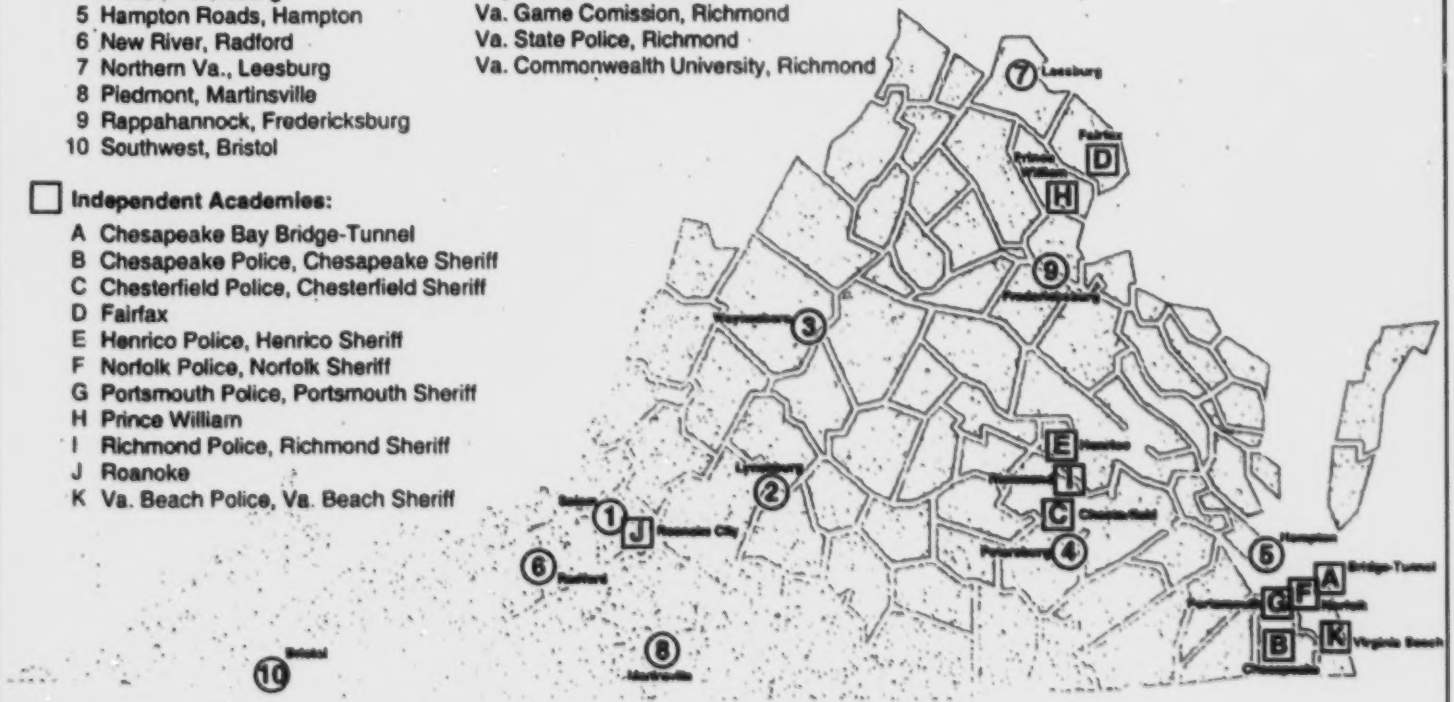
1 Cardinal, Salem
2 Central, Lynchburg
3 Central Shenandoah, Waynesboro
4 Crater, Petersburg
5 Hampton Roads, Hampton
6 New River, Radford
7 Northern Va., Leesburg
8 Piedmont, Martinsville
9 Rappahannock, Fredericksburg
10 Southwest, Bristol

Independent Academies:

A Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel
B Chesapeake Police, Chesapeake Sheriff
C Chesterfield Police, Chesterfield Sheriff
D Fairfax
E Henrico Police, Henrico Sheriff
F Norfolk Police, Norfolk Sheriff
G Portsmouth Police, Portsmouth Sheriff
H Prince William
I Richmond Police, Richmond Sheriff
J Roanoke
K Va. Beach Police, Va. Beach Sheriff

State Agency Academies:

ABC, Richmond
Dept. of Corrections, Goochland
Dept. of Criminal Justice Services, Richmond
Capitol Police, Richmond
Va. Game Comission, Richmond
Va. State Police, Richmond
Va. Commonwealth University, Richmond



Source: DCJS.

6A

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advanced and specialized training, and more emphasis on the "best practices" of teaching would improve entry level law enforcement training.

Virginia Has a Large Number of Academies

Among the states, Virginia has the fourth largest number of criminal justice training academies. The fact that Virginia has so many academies raises the question of whether any additional training academies are needed, and creates the potential for substantial differences to exist in how basic law enforcement is taught from one locality or region to another.

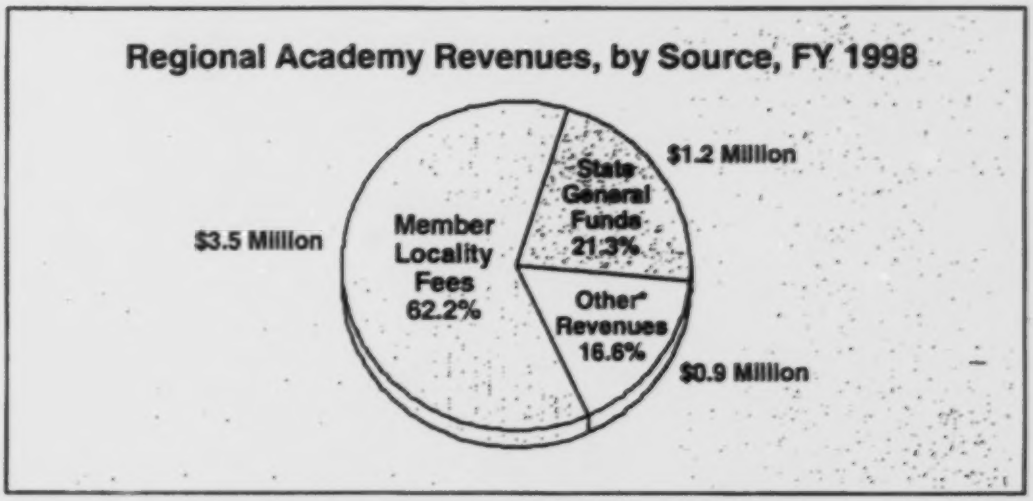
There is also a problem with local agencies switching from one regional academy to another, as 24 did between 1995 and 1998. While there are various reasons for switching to a different training academy, there is some indication that law enforcement agencies "shop" for training, looking for lower costs or greater control, regardless of having committed to a regional academy. The General Assembly may want to direct DCJS to develop strategies for stabilizing the membership of the regional academies.

Localities Provide Most Funding for Regional Academies

State funding for regional academies has declined from levels provided in the early 1980s. Now, localities contribute the bulk of the resources necessary for the academies to operate. In FY 1998, the State provided 21.3 percent of the revenue available to the regional academies, while localities provided 62.2 percent (see graphic, next page). New State funding, derived from a $1 per case fee levied on all misdemeanor, felony, and traffic convictions statewide, will increase the State's share of funding to regional academies to approximately 36 percent in fiscal year 1999. There have been proposals that this new fee-derived State funding be shared with the independent academies. However, a reduction of State funding would likely further limit the ability of the regional academies to provide quality training to criminal justice officers.

Training Standards Are Extensive

Training standards for entry level law enforcement are extensive and specific. There are 432 performance objectives which each student must be tested on prior to the



completion of training. DCJS standards require a minimum of 315 hours of classroom instruction and 60 hours of on-the-job field training for entry level law enforcement training. While all regional academies meet these minimum requirements, the academies vary significantly in the amount of time allocated to specific topics and classes. Two regional academies required more than twice the minimum number of hours. Most regional academies are increasing their classroom requirement, because in 1999 the classroom requirement increases to a minimum of 480 hours.

JLARC reviewed course offerings at the regional academies and found considerable variation in the amount of time allocated to specific topics. Basic search, seizure, and evidence classes ranged from eight to 32 hours, for example, and time spent on interview and interrogation techniques ranged from four to 17 hours.

Such extensive variation suggests that new officers have widely varying levels of exposure to and knowledge of the core topics. Such variation may also indicate that the State standards are inadequate. DCJS should systematically determine an appropriate time-frame to cover each of the topics in the core law enforcement curriculum, and incorporate these times into guidelines. DCJS also should also evaluate "distance learning" and computerized approaches to learning the basic law enforcement curriculum. These approaches may eliminate the need to regulate training hours, because students could learn some subjects at their own pace, yet still be tested on performance objectives.

Most Instructors Are Volunteers

Almost all instructors at regional academies are volunteer, regular-duty police officers from member agencies. This benefits the students, who receive training closely connected to practice through the experience of working police officers. Instructors tend to be highly motivated, in part because they are teaching students who may later provide important assistance on the streets. Ninety-four percent of students reported in a JLARC survey that instructors are qualified to teach.

Because they are volunteers, instructors are not always available to teach, and problems of consistency and continuity of instruction can easily develop. Such instructors may also teach their own agency's policies and procedures, despite the regional character of the academy. There is also some concern that using regular duty officers as academy instructors may reduce law enforcement in some communities. Selective recruitment of instructors, better support for advanced or specialized training for instructors, and more emphasis on the "best practices" of teaching could improve entry level training.

Testing Policies Are Weak

At the completion of each course, students are tested on their knowledge of material taught. DCJS standards permit an unlimited number of re-tests, and most regional academies allow students three tries to answer a test question correctly. Some regional academies re-test students on the exact same question, particularly troublesome for true/false questions. At other regional academies, on the third try the student is permitted to write a paragraph on the performance objective, or just to discuss the topic to the instructor's satisfaction.

While the intention behind these approaches may be to ensure the student has learned the objective, the willingness to adjust testing methods to accommodate poor performance is troublesome. Of the respondents to the JLARC survey of recent graduates, more than 27 percent said that tests did not reasonably indicate whether they had mastered the material.

DCJS should take several steps to strengthen testing policies and practices at

the regional academies. Re-testing should be as rigorous as the initial tests. Re-testing on the same question should be avoided. Effective testing methods should be identified and covered in instructor training. DCJS should also consider developing a database of validated test questions for use in law enforcement training.

Standardized Law Enforcement Test Should Be Considered

A key part of the study mandate was to develop quantitative methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry level training. As noted above, entry level testing at the regional academies requires some improvements. The best method of measuring entry level training on a statewide basis would be a standardized statewide test for entry into the law enforcement profession. Under this approach, a statewide test would be administered to all students who completed a basic law enforcement training program at a regional or an independent academy. Such a test would help ensure that all students have mastered the core knowledge of the profession.

Virginia statutes currently require completion of education and a standard test for a variety of professions. Twenty-five states currently require law enforcement officers to pass a standard test before assuming their duties. The ability to pass such a statewide test would show that entry level training in all criminal justice training academies provide a solid grounding in the fundamentals of the profession. DCJS should develop such a test which, along with completion of regional training, should be used for certification of law enforcement officers statewide.

Driver Training Facility Is Needed

Regional academies employ the use of local raceways, or make "ad hoc" arrangements such as local parking lots or abandoned air strips on nearby military bases, for driver training. These facilities can be used for minimal basic training, but are limited in simulating realistic training situations. In addition, use of these types of make-shift arrangements often results in considerable downtime for trainees and various logistical problems.

A job task analysis of law enforcement jobs conducted by DCJS found that 60 percent of law enforcement officers responded that they engaged in high speed pursuit driving, and 84 percent indicated that they engaged in high speed response driving on the open road. Law enforcement supervisors surveyed during the job task analysis indicated that the consequences for inadequate performance by an officer operating a law enforcement vehicle ranged from potentially serious to disastrous.

Despite the potential safety risks to both officer and the public and the liability associated with law enforcement vehicle operation, no regional academy has access to a state-of-the-art driver training facility. A state-of-the-art driver training facility has been cited by instructors, academy directors, State Police, and DCJS as one of the most significant needs of law enforcement training. The development of such a facility would not only vastly improve basic law enforcement training, but also improve public safety across the Commonwealth. The General Assembly may wish to direct DCJS and the State Police to begin planning such a facility, and to explore the feasibility of using a portion of Fort Pickett for a driver training facility.

Field Training Should Be Strengthened

Once a new officer completes training at a criminal justice academy, he or she returns to their home agency for field training. DCJS standards require a minimum of 60 hours of field training (100 hours effective July 1, 1999). Field training is the responsibility of the local criminal justice agencies,

not the training academies. The academies typically play no role in field training.

JLARC staff found that field training varies more widely than does training delivered by the regional academies. Some agencies require extensive additional classroom training on local policies and supplemental topics such as cultural diversity. At the other extreme, some agencies may not be enforcing the 60 hour requirement.

Part of the problem is that DCJS does not require any specific training for the field training officers. In addition, there is insufficient monitoring to make sure the field training requirement is met. DCJS should establish a training requirement for field training officers that includes the use of objective criteria to evaluate a new officer's performance, and incorporates performance objectives for field training. DCJS should review the content of local field training to ensure that the objectives are being addressed.

In-Service Training Needs Improvement

Virginia requires extensive training at the start of a law enforcement officer's career. The in-service requirement of 40 hours every two years after certification appears modest compared to the entry level requirements. DCJS places only a few constraints on the training an officer may choose in order to fulfill the requirement. These constraints are that four hours must be in legal training, and 36 hours may be on career development or electives, of which no more than eight hours may be firearms training.

This relatively unstructured approach allows officers to develop specialties or take other training that may be required by their employing agency. It also means than an officer may never receive any additional or updated training in essential skills and knowledge. Changes in the law occur every year, as do changes in technology and police procedures. The DCJS in-service training requirement should provide for annual updates on law changes, and DCJS should be able to mandate that certain topics, such as the safe handling of vehicles equipped with anti-lock brakes, be covered during in-service training. With these improvements, the consistency of law enforcement training as provided by the regional academies can be enhanced.

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I. Introduction

Criminal justice training academies conduct training for local law enforcement and jailers as well as other personnel, such as dispatchers and investigators, who assist and support the public safety mission of government. Academies provide entry-level, in-service, specialized, and advanced training to their member agencies, and to other organizations by contract or special arrangements.

There are 36 criminal justice training academies in Virginia. Of these, 28 focus primarily on local law enforcement, seven are operated by State agencies and focus on State-level law enforcement or criminal justice duties, and one serves the Washington Metro Transit. Of the 28 focusing on local law enforcement, ten are regional training academies and are partly State funded. The remaining 18 are operated by single jurisdictions, primarily the larger cities and suburban counties, with no direct State funding, and are referred to as "independent" academies.

The ten regional academies are located throughout the Commonwealth. The regional academies provide training to 82 percent of Virginia's 363 criminal justice agencies, representing 55 percent of the criminal justice officers in the Commonwealth.

House Joint Resolution 285, approved by the 1998 General Assembly, directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the regional criminal justice training academies. Specifically, the resolution directs JLARC staff to:

- study methods to develop and measure the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training, and
- develop quantitative methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry level training.

A copy of the resolution is attached as Appendix A.

This chapter provides information on the evolution of Virginia's criminal justice training network. This chapter also reviews previous studies of criminal justice training, overviews the importance of training, and provides information on JLARC's review of criminal justice training and the overall organization of the report.

OVERVIEW OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING

Localities have wide latitude in meeting State training requirements for criminal justice officers. There are two key State requirements: (1) all law enforcement officers and all jail officers must be certified through the successful completion of basic training at an approved criminal justice training academy, and (2) the employee's hir-

ing agency must notify the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) annually that their officers have met the minimum State standards. DCJS establishes the minimum training standards, which cover the most important tasks and activities performed by officers.

Under State law, localities are free to choose which academy to attend, whether to establish their own academy, whether and how to supplement the minimum prescribed training, and a variety of related matters. Localities also pay most of the costs associated with the training.

Localities have an incentive under the *Code of Virginia* to ensure that their law enforcement officers are trained. This is because a locality's annual receipt of "HB 599" funds from the State, unrestricted financial support for local governments totaling over $67 million annually, depends upon the locality certifying to DCJS each year that all of its law enforcement officers either meet or are exempt from DCJS's minimum training standards. Under the *Code of Virginia*, full-time officers hired prior to 1971 are exempted from the standards, and officers employed prior to 1987 are exempted from the entry-level training requirements. As constitutional officers, sheriffs are exempt from the training requirements. Chiefs of police are not exempted.

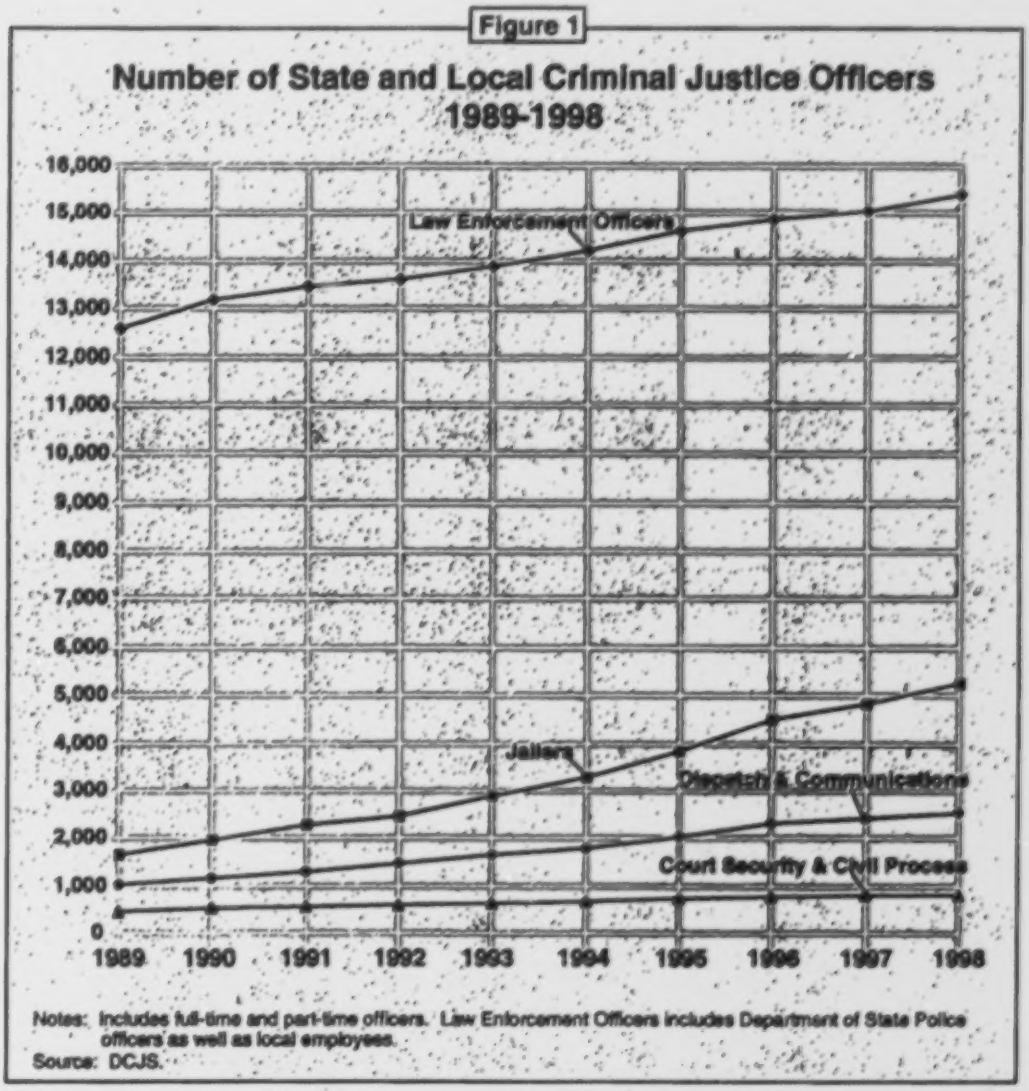
Criminal Justice Officers in Virginia

In January 1998, there were 31,500 criminal justice officers in Virginia, serving a variety of public safety functions. Certified law enforcement officers comprise 15,599, or about half of the total. According to the *Code of Virginia*, a law enforcement officer is any employee of a police department or sheriff's office which is a part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions, and who is responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of the penal, traffic or highway laws of this Commonwealth. The definition includes State and local personnel. The remaining criminal justice officers primarily provide security services in jails, prisons, and courthouses. Other specialties, such as civil process servers and dispatchers, are also included in the count.

Figure 1 shows the growth that has occurred in the number of criminal justice officers, excluding corrections officers employed by the Virginia Department of Corrections. The overall growth totaled 52 percent between 1989 and 1998. The highest rates of growth have occurred in the number of jailers (217 percent) and communications officers (148 percent). These growth rates reflect the trends in jail construction and in the establishment of Enhanced 911 (E-911) centers.

Law enforcement officers from a wide variety of employers are currently certified as having completed basic training. Officers from counties, cities, and towns in Virginia are certified as law enforcement officers. Employees of a variety of other organizations also attend law enforcement training and are certified. These organizations include:

Figure 1



Notes: Includes full-time and part-time officers. Law Enforcement Officers includes Department of State Police officers as well as local employees.
Source: DCJS.

- State agencies such as the Departments of State Police, Alcoholic Beverage Control, Marine Resources, Game & Inland Fisheries, and others;
- other public entities such as the Metro Washington Airports Authority, other airports, various colleges and universities, and WMATA (Metro) Transit;
- corporations such as Carilion Health Systems, Babcock & Wilcox Company, Norfolk Southern, and CSX Transportation, and

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- privately-owned developments and theme parks, including Kings Dominion, Kingsmill, and Wintergreen.

In 1997, 11,700 or 78 percent of all law enforcement officers completed some type of training at a criminal justice training academy. Most of these were veteran officers attending "in service" training. In 1997, 1,135 students completed law enforcement officer basic training.

What Is Criminal Justice Training?

Statutes require that all law enforcement officers must be certified as having completed basic training which meets mandatory minimum training standards set by the Board and Department of Criminal Justice Services. The current requirement is that within the first 12 months of employment, 315 hours of classroom training covering a core curriculum must be completed. Effective July 1, 1999, these requirements will increase to 480 hours of classroom training within the first 12 months of employment. During the course of this study, a transition provision was in effect which permitted academies to use either the old or the new standards.

There is also a field training requirement, which is currently 60 hours of local training, to be completed within 120 days of completing the basic school. The field training requirement rises to 100 hours effective July 1, 1999.

Entry level law enforcement training combines classroom instruction with hands-on practical exercises in driving, firearms, and defensive tactics. Students are generally tested and graded on each topic and exercise. The core curriculum prescribed by DCJS covers 20 broad subjects which all law enforcement officers must learn. Classroom topics focus on a variety of legal topics, such as the laws of arrest, use of force rules, motor vehicle law, documentation, crime prevention techniques, and courtroom testimony.

Practical exercises generally include activities such as building searches, vehicle stops, and criminal and accident investigations. Typically, one week of basic training is used for firearms training, and another week is spent on driver training and vehicle operation. Training in defensive tactics, which also generally requires at least 40 hours, covers arrest control techniques, body searches, handcuffing, control holds and takedowns, use of batons and other equipment, and basic officer safety. Regional academies usually supplement the core curriculum with a variety of topics which vary from one regional academy to another.

Training for jail and custodial officers must be at least 152 hours, based on DCJS standards. Officers being trained in court security and process service are subject to a 172 hour training requirement. DCJS has a cadre of trainers who travel to the various regional and independent academies and provide the classroom training for these officers. The classroom training for these officers covers legal issues such as the laws of arrest, liability, and juvenile law, as well as community relations and an over-

view of the court system. There is also a specialized curriculum tailored to the needs of the three groups: custodial officers, court security officers, and process servers. All of these trainees are required to have training in firearms, officer safety and arrest techniques, and the proper use of physical restraints.

Why Training Matters

Training is essential to the effective performance on the job of criminal justice officers. Basic training provides the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to do the job required of law enforcement, custodial officers, and other criminal justice officers. As law and technology have changed and evolved, the need for training has become an integral part of a criminal justice career.

There are important legal bases for training criminal justice officers. First, Virginia statutes mandate training for law enforcement officers, for persons providing courthouse and courtroom security, for deputy sheriffs designated to serve civil process, for jailers and custodial officers, for dispatchers, and for several law enforcement specialties such as detectives and radar operators. As noted earlier, to receive State financial assistance, localities must certify annually that their law enforcement officers meet the training requirements.

Several court decisions also emphasize the need for training. The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Canton v. Harris* (489 U.S. 378 (1989)), held that under certain circumstances a municipality may be liable for constitutional violations and injuries resulting from a failure to train its employees. The *Canton* decision and *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1 (1985), require that law enforcement officers must be trained in constitutional limitations on the use of deadly force. At least one recent case examined the training provided by a regional academy in Virginia in light of these U.S. Supreme Court decisions and found the training to constitute a defense (*Moody v. Mainwaring*, 1997 U.S. Dist. Lexis 16295 (E.D. Va. 1997)).

Regional and Independent Academies

Criminal justice training is provided through a network of ten regional and 18 independent academies. Local governing bodies may choose to establish or join an existing regional academy, or may permit the local criminal justice agencies to contract for or provide training on their own, independent of any other jurisdiction's training efforts. Most instructors are not full-time teachers but instead are full-time officers who are either assigned or volunteer to teach at an academy. Other important resources, such as firing ranges and driving tracks, are also typically donated or loaned from localities or private organizations.

Unlike some other entities serving multiple jurisdictions, such as community services boards or planning district commissions, localities have the flexibility to join

or leave a regional criminal justice training academy, or to establish their own independent academy. Statutes do not specify which locality must belong to which regional academy, nor are there other statutory restrictions on membership or on the number of regional academies. Any two or more localities can join together to establish a regional academy.

Since regional academies were first established in the early 1970s, there have been as many as 12 regional academies. As recently as 1996, there were nine; currently there are ten. The location of regional and independent academies is shown in Figure 2. A listing of each local agency and whether it is a member of a regional or independent criminal justice training academy is included as Appendix B.

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING

Several prior studies of criminal justice training have been completed by the Crime Commission and by DCJS. Most of these studies have focused only on the regional academies. Three recurrent issues appear in the studies: the proper level of State funding for regional academies; whether localities should be allowed to withdraw from one region and join another; and whether the academies should retain authority over a variety of curriculum and testing issues.

A 1980 consultant study for the State Crime Commission and JLARC focused on the demise of federal funding of law enforcement training. At that time, federal funds amounted to 90 percent of the then-existing regional academies' budgets. The study recommended the State fully fund the administrative and training costs of the regional and independent academies, with instructors provided by participating localities at no cost. The recommended State funding was not provided.

Gallagher Report

In 1986, DCJS commissioned Gallagher Research Services to review the State's criminal justice training delivery system. To develop the report, a study team visited most training academies and conducted extensive surveys about the strengths and weaknesses of the training network. The report recommended a variety of actions intended to strengthen the regional academies. Recommendations included:

- The Commonwealth should establish clearly defined boundaries for each State-funded regional academy (the question of enforcing regional boundaries was discussed, but no recommendations were made).
- Directors of the regional academies should become full-time State employees.

Figure 2

Criminal Justice Training Academies

Regional Academies:

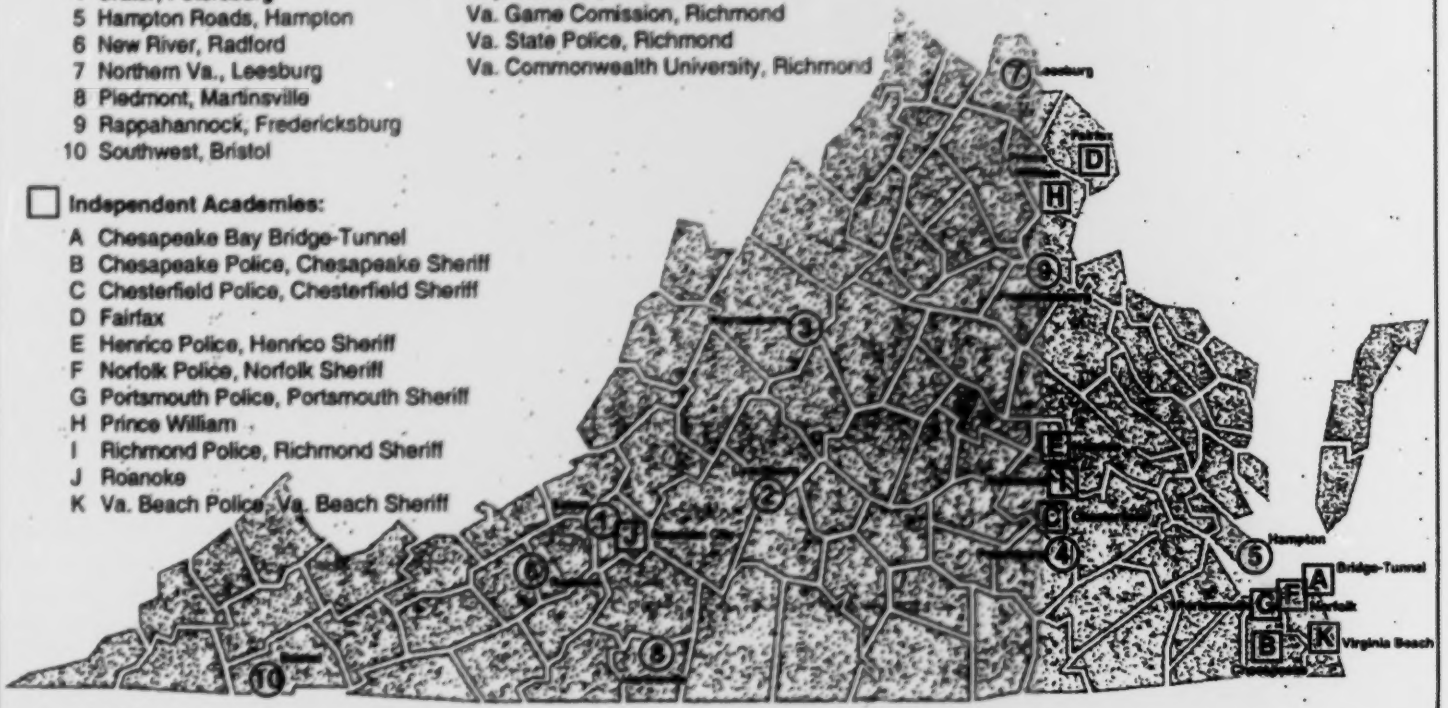
1 Cardinal, Salem
2 Central, Lynchburg
3 Central Shenandoah, Waynesboro
4 Crater, Petersburg
5 Hampton Roads, Hampton
6 New River, Radford
7 Northern Va., Leesburg
8 Piedmont, Martinsville
9 Rappahannock, Fredericksburg
10 Southwest, Bristol

Independent Academies:

A Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel
B Chesapeake Police, Chesapeake Sheriff
C Chesterfield Police, Chesterfield Sheriff
D Fairfax
E Henrico Police, Henrico Sheriff
F Norfolk Police, Norfolk Sheriff
G Portsmouth Police, Portsmouth Sheriff
H Prince William
I Richmond Police, Richmond Sheriff
J Roanoke
K Va. Beach Police, Va. Beach Sheriff

State Agency Academies:

ABC, Richmond
Dept. of Corrections, Goochland
Dept. of Criminal Justice Services, Richmond
Capitol Police, Richmond
Va. Game Comission, Richmond
Va. State Police, Richmond
Va. Commonwealth University, Richmond



Source: DCJS.

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- Each regional academy should have one or more State-funded full-time instructors to conduct mandated training.
- The State should at least partially fund all non-State agency academies which provide mandated criminal justice training.
- DCJS should establish an academy certification process.
- The State and localities should share the cost of mandated training, with revenues derived from a fee attached to convictions.

Several of these recommendations were implemented, such as the academy certification process. In 1997 the suggestion was implemented to establish a revenue source derived from a fee attached to certain convictions. Other recommendations have been partially addressed. For example, the Criminal Justice Services Board established a procedure for localities to transfer their membership between regional academies, but no firm regional boundaries or enforcement mechanisms have been established. Other recommendations, such as establishing State employees at the regional academies, have not been addressed.

Crime Commission Reports

In the 1990s, the State Crime Commission completed several studies of criminal justice training academies. The Crime Commission's 1993 study recommended funding for a full time instructor at each regional academy, and a job task analyst position at DCJS. The job task analyst position, which was subsequently provided, was to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities performed by law enforcement officers, and to ensure that academy training adequately addressed them. The 1993 study also supported the concept of a centralized driver training facility, to be funded by the State and made available for criminal justice training statewide. Such a facility has not been funded.

A 1994 Crime Commission study recommended several legislative actions:

- Provide immunity from civil liability for law enforcement agency administrators.
- Require the use of pre-employment testing including literacy, psychological and physical agility tests to screen officer applicants.
- Enhance the minimum qualifications set in statute for deputy sheriffs and law enforcement officers.
- Establish a formal certification and decertification process for law enforcement officers.

The immunity and certification/decertification processes were subsequently established, and statutory minimum requirements for law enforcement officers were strengthened.

Another study by the Crime Commission was reported in 1997. Crime Commission staff surveyed chiefs of police and sheriffs who used regional academies for training. Survey results indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of training provided by their respective academies, but dissatisfaction with the level of State funding. The study recommended a $1.00 fee be assessed on all convictions for traffic offenses, misdemeanors, and felonies, to be used to increase State funding for the regional academies. The General Assembly implemented this fee in 1997.

The Crime Commission reported its most recent study in 1998. This study surveyed regional academy directors about regional boundaries, staffing, and other matters. The study recommended additional enforcement authority for the DCJS policy on regional boundaries, but otherwise recommended only minor changes in determining staff qualifications and related matters. The 1998 study also recommended a standardized test for each topical area of mandated training, with successful completion required for officer certification.

Several of the Crime Commission studies noted that while the State has a clear interest in and concern for consistency and standardization, localities are currently paying most of the cost of law enforcement training. As a result, localities appear to have substantial latitude in the delivery of such training, as long as certain State "minimums" are met.

JLARC REVIEW

House Joint Resolution 285, adopted by the 1998 General Assembly, directs JLARC "to study methods of developing and measuring the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training." The resolution also directs JLARC to develop quantitative methods for measuring the knowledge, skill, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry-level training. The study mandate requires JLARC to report its findings prior to the 1999 General Assembly.

DCJS, which was directed to collaborate on the study by the mandate, helped to define the scope of the review. HJR 285 focuses narrowly on questions of testing, consistency, standardization, and uniformity of training for entry level criminal justice officers. Discussions with staff from DCJS and the Crime Commission, who were involved in drafting the study mandate, indicated that the study should address the broader issues affecting academies. In separate interviews, staff from the two agencies brought up a number of similar concerns about criminal justice training. It therefore seemed appropriate to address some of these concerns in this study.

Study Issues

To address the broader range on concerns called for by the study mandate and suggested by DCJS and Crime Commission staff, JLARC staff identified three major issues for the study. These study issues provided the basic framework for the JLARC research, and the resulting finding and recommendations.

The first issue is: Is the delivery system for criminal justice training effective and efficient? This issue addresses concerns related to the number of training academies, funding, and facilities. The ability of the academies to provide quality training is dependent on the funding made available by the State and member localities. The stability of the membership of local law enforcement agencies in each academy also can affect the quality of instruction, availability of facilities, and funding by local governments.

The second issue is: Do the regional academies provide an acceptable level of consistency in basic law enforcement training? This issue examines the extent to which the academies have curricula, instructors, and testing policies which provide the same quantity and quality of criminal justice training statewide. Since DCJS standards for training are applicable statewide, it is reasonable to expect some consistency in the training programs. This issue examined whether officers receive the same basic training program statewide.

The third issue focuses specifically on post-academy training, when officers begin to apply their training to actual duty assignments: Is field training and in-service training adequate to ensure continued competency by criminal justice officers? This issue looks at training that extends beyond the academies to the local law enforcement agencies which are required to provide field training, and to ensure that their officers receive appropriate in-service training.

Research Activities

In response to this study mandate, JLARC staff undertook a variety of activities. A principal method of collecting information was conducting interviews. In total, JLARC staff conducted approximately 60 interviews. These interviews included DCJS staff as well as directors, instructors, and employees of all ten regional academies and selected independent academies.

As part of the review, JLARC staff conducted two mail surveys. One survey was sent to approximately one-half of the officers who completed basic law enforcement training at the ten regional academies between January and June, 1998. This survey asked for information about the quantity and quality of training received at the regional academies. It also asked for the student's assessment of the instructors and facilities, and asked about the student's overall satisfaction with the training. A copy of the survey form which includes the results is included as Appendix C.

The second mail survey conducted for this study surveyed the field training officers who worked with graduates surveyed by JLARC staff. The field training officers were asked about their preparation to serve as a field training officer, and about their agency's field training policies and procedures. A copy of the survey form which includes the results is included as Appendix D.

Field work for this study included visits to all ten regional academies. While on site JLARC staff interviewed the directors, the board chairmen, and a sample of instructors, and reviewed various documents. Selected independent training academies were visited, as was the training academy operated by the Department of State Police.

Extensive data were collected from each academy, including selected lesson plans, examples of recent tests, financial data, and other materials. JLARC staff also reviewed the regulations and standards issued by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. During the course of this study, JLARC staff also reviewed performance objectives, job task analysis results, and other information compiled by the department.

Report Organization

This report is organized into four chapters. This chapter has presented an overview of criminal justice training in Virginia, and has reviewed the legislative mandate for this study. Chapter II discusses the overall structure for delivery of criminal justice training to entry level officers. The chapter also reviews the costs and funding of regional criminal justice training. Chapter III reviews the content, instruction, and testing methods of entry level law enforcement training. Chapter IV discusses field training, which is the final phase of entry level training, and reviews in-service training.

II. The Local Criminal Justice Training System

In recent years Virginia has strengthened its entry level criminal justice training. Required training time has been increased to accommodate new topics and equipment, and to permit instructors to provide more detail on basic law and procedures. As the number of criminal justice employees has increased, the training system has expanded and decentralized to provide more local and regional training capacity around the State. Law enforcement training for localities was provided prior to 1972 mainly by the Department of State Police at one location, but is now delivered through 36 regional and independent local academies.

This decentralized academy system permits localities to take the lead in responding to the training needs of their local officers. While it provides flexibility for local agencies, it has also resulted in somewhat unstable regions, with a substantial amount of switching by localities back and forth between regional academies. The decentralized nature of the system is also reflected in the funding for the academies. Most funding is provided by local governments, with State funding accounting for less than one fourth of overall academy revenues. This chapter examines the overall structure and funding of the regional academies.

A SYSTEM OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ACADEMIES

The *Code of Virginia* establishes a training structure in which the State, through the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), sets standards for training, and local governing bodies are authorized to establish criminal justice training academies to meet the training standards. As a local option program, the State sets no constraints on the total number of such academies, or on which localities will be served by any given academy.

Partly as a result of this approach, a relatively large number of criminal justice training academies have developed in the Commonwealth. According to a recent report of the State Crime Commission, Virginia has the fourth highest number of such academies in the nation. While it is necessary to allow for some flexibility in responding to local priorities, consideration should be given to whether the State now has enough criminal justice training academies.

Virginia Has a Large Number of Academies

Texas, North Carolina, and Florida are the only states with more criminal justice training academies than Virginia. The remaining 46 states have fewer. The fact that Virginia has so many raises the question of whether any additional training academies are needed, and creates the prospect that substantial differences may exist in how basic law enforcement is taught from one locality or region to another. In addition,

some local law enforcement agencies appear to "shop" for training, looking for lower costs or greater control, regardless of having committed to a regional arrangement, or of the disruptive effects of switching academies. To curtail this activity, some limits may need to be set.

Proliferation Is Costly. Despite significant growth in the number of criminal justice officers, Virginia had a stable number of regional academies from 1983 until 1997. In that year, several agencies separated from the New River Regional Academy, established the Piedmont Criminal Justice Training Academy, and received funding from the General Assembly. Currently, several law enforcement agencies from the Lord Fairfax Planning District have submitted letters of intent to withdraw from an existing regional academy. They have indicated that have entered into a temporary contract with another regional academy and are considering several options including the formation of a new regional academy.

Establishment of additional law enforcement academies is costly and leads to some duplication, as each new academy must have facilities and staff, funded primarily by the participating localities. The local option nature of criminal justice training programs, wherein localities may join or leave regional academies at will or set up their own independent academy, has contributed to the increasing number of academies.

Criminal justice training academies may be established only with approval from either the Board of Criminal Justice Services or by inclusion in the Appropriation Act. The Board has not initiated approval of any new regional academy since the 1970s. Instead, regional academies established since then have all been added by the General Assembly in the Appropriations Act, along with specific funding. For example, Piedmont Regional Criminal Justice Training Academy was funded in the amount of $63,562 by the 1997 General Assembly. The Board approved the academy subsequent to the General Assembly action.

Switching Academies Is Disruptive. Localities may join or withdraw from a regional academy almost at will. Withdrawing from a regional academy creates a resource gap for the academy and may jeopardize the provision of training. There is no State requirement that localities belong to one region or another, nor does the State encourage or discourage localities from changing regional academy membership or from starting their own academy. The primary constraint in DCJS guidelines is procedural and specifies that a locality may withdraw from a region after giving notice of intent to withdraw to the regional academy's governing board, and after meeting its financial obligation to the regional academy for the fiscal year. Several regional directors noted that budgeting and resource planning are extremely difficult when agencies are free to withdraw from a region.

When localities withdraw from a regional academy, they withdraw their financial support as well as their officer population. The new special funding stream is distributed on the basis of officer population, so when a regional academy's officer population declines, so will the amount of State funding for the academy. Establishment of

a new regional academy could reduce the amounts going to the existing regional academies, although this issue has not yet been resolved by DCJS. Also unclear is whether State funds can be used to discourage the establishment of new regional academies, or to discourage localities from switching between regional academies. DCJS and its Committee on Training had begun to meet and discuss these matters as JLARC concluded this study. However, DCJS lacks clear statutory authority to enforce any regional boundaries.

Since 1995, 24 criminal justice agencies have switched between regional academies, as shown in Exhibit 1 (bottom of next page). Eleven agencies left one regional academy to join another, and three left to join an independent academy. Nine withdrew from the New River Regional Academy and established the Piedmont Regional Criminal Justice Training Academy.

When a participating agency withdraws from a regional academy, the academy's plans for future training programs may be jeopardized. The withdrawing agency not only takes its own local funding from the academy, reducing funds available, but it also takes instructors and other resources that may have been critically important to planned training classes. The quality of the academy's training may be inconsistent or even decline when a withdrawing agency removes experienced instructors from the academy.

The process for withdrawing from regional academies is fairly easy, compared to the process for a locality withdrawing from a regional jail. Statutes provide that, once financial obligations have been incurred, a locality may withdraw from a regional jail only upon unanimous consent of all the participating localities. The standard is high because the regional jail authority may have issued debt, and each participating locality has responsibility for that debt. A similar standard should be considered for localities desiring to withdraw from a regional training academy. Regional academies often have long-term financial commitments which may be jeopardized by fluctuations in membership. Withdrawing experienced instructors can also seriously hinder training, especially when replacements may not be readily available.

Agencies change regional membership in response to a variety of factors. Several regional academy directors indicated that participating agencies were more likely to switch academies after a change in leadership in the local agency, such as when a new chief of police is chosen, or when a new sheriff is elected. The new chief or sheriff may prefer a different training academy due to personal experience with a different regional academy, or due to other factors. According to regional directors and several police chiefs and sheriffs interviewed during this study, differences of opinion over the location and physical facilities of a regional academy, as well as concern about potential increased costs, have also contributed to agency decisions to change academies. As local agencies' budgets have been adjusted and sometimes reduced, travel expenses to a more distant regional academy may become a problem.

Recommendation (1). **The General Assembly may wish to direct the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop strategies to stabilize the**

membership of regional criminal justice academies including financial incentives and to report on the feasibility of establishing permanent boundaries for the training academies. DCJS should report its findings prior to the 2000 Session.

Exhibit 1

Agencies Changing Participation in Criminal Justice Training Academies 1995 - 1998

Agency	Withdrew From	Joined
Alleghany County Sheriff's Office	Central Shenandoah	Cardinal
Bedford County Sheriff's Office	Cardinal	Central Virginia
Bedford City Police Department	Central Virginia	Cardinal
Buena Vista Police Department	Central Shenandoah	Central Virginia
Chatham Police Department	New River	Piedmont
Clifton Forge Police Department	Central Shenandoah	Cardinal
Colonial Heights Police Department	Crater	Chesterfield
Colonial Heights Sheriff's Office*	Crater	Crater
Covington Police Department	Central Shenandoah	Cardinal
Culpeper County Sheriff's Office	Central Shenandoah	Rappahannock
Danville Police Department	New River	Piedmont
Danville Sheriff's Office	New River	Piedmont
Gretna Police Department	New River	Piedmont
Henry County Sheriff's Office	New River	Piedmont
Hopewell Sheriff's Office*	Crater	Crater
Hopewell Police Department*	Crater	Crater
Martinsville Police Department	New River	Piedmont
Martinsville Sheriff's Office	New River	Piedmont
Patrick County Sheriff's Office	New River	Piedmont
Prince George's Police Department	Crater	Chesterfield
Prince George's Sheriff's Office*	Crater	Crater
Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office	New River	Piedmont
Roanoke Regional Airport Commission	Cardinal	Southwest
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Parks	Rappahannock	Cardinal

*Agencies which withdrew from Crater and contracted with Chesterfield Police Department for training, and then re-joined Crater.

Note: Excludes new joining members, such as new regional jails. Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads Regional Academies reported no switching between 1995-1998.

Source: JLARC staff interviews with regional academy directors.

FUNDING OF REGIONAL ACADEMIES

State funding is provided for regional academies, but at a relatively low level. The localities participating in a regional academy provide the bulk of regional academy funding. Localities also contribute the vast majority of instructors at the regional academies, and some localities provide additional goods and services. State and federal agencies, as well as private individuals, also supply some support services and instructors. Due to these and other factors, the quality of training and training facilities varies significantly between the regional academies, although none fall below the State's minimum standards.

State Funding Is Modest

State funding for regional academies has been modest, while localities have contributed the bulk of the resources necessary for the academies to operate. Although some localities are better able to support the academies than others, the entrepreneurial spirit of regional academy staff has helped improve and enhance training programs. As a result, many agencies and entities provide important services and support to help make training happen.

When regional criminal justice training academies were established in the early 1970s, federal funding was available to cover as much as 90 percent of an academy's budget. The federal government eliminated this funding in the early 1980s.

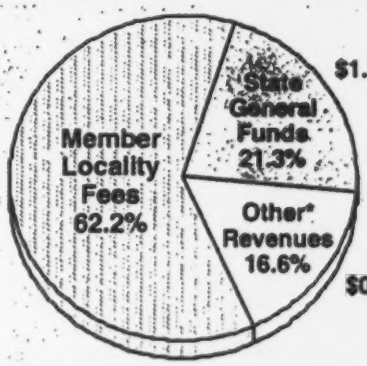
According to DCJS, when federal funds were being phased out in the early 1980s, the General Assembly committed to providing 60 percent of the replacement funding, with local governments providing the remaining 40 percent. Initially, State funding was provided at this level. State funding for regional academies has not remained at the 60 percent level, however. As regional academy budgets grew during the 1980s, the State's contribution was level funded, so the State's share of the regional academies' budgets declined. The participating local agencies provided most of the additional funds.

In FY 1998, State general funds provided, on average, 21.3 percent of the revenue available to the regional academies (Figure 3). These funds provide unrestricted support for the regional academies.

Compared to the average, two regional academies received an unusually high allocation of State general funds, and one received an unusually low allocation, as a percentage of total academy revenue (Table 1). Piedmont Regional Criminal Justice Training Academy received a State appropriation totaling 60 percent of the academy's total revenues. According to DCJS, the appropriation was set at 60 percent of Piedmont's proposed first-year operating budget because it was new, and needed additional start-up funding. The New River Criminal Justice Training Academy's FY 1998 budget consisted of 59 percent State general funds, largely as a result of nine localities withdraw-

Figure 3

Regional Academy Revenues, by Source, FY 1998



Notes: Locality fees include tuition and fees paid by local governments participating in regional academies as charter members. Other revenues include fees paid by State agencies, nonmember localities, other agencies and individuals who receive training; grants; facility rental; and other miscellaneous income.

Source: JLARC review of academy budgets.

Table 1

Regional Academy Revenues
FY 1998

Regional Academy	State General Funds	Member Locality Fees*	Other** Revenues	Total Revenues
Cardinal	$ 71,657	$ 118,351	$ 95,911	$ 285,918
Central Virginia	88,273	217,340	19,789	325,401
Central Shenandoah (FY 97)	132,450	318,641	132,362	583,453
Crater	82,654	92,147	79,598	254,399
Hampton Roads	209,866	325,999	219,547	755,412
New River	112,987	78,608	—	191,595
Northern Virginia	268,160	1,748,234	203,606	2,220,000
Piedmont	63,562	112,195	—	175,757
Rappahannock	81,329	341,125	114,613	537,067
Southwest	78,032	124,350	62,183	264,565
Total	**$1,188,970**	**$3,476,990**	**$927,607**	**$5,593,567**

*Includes tuition and fees paid by local governments participating in regional academies as charter members.
**Includes fees paid by State agencies, nonmember localities, other agencies and individuals who receive training; grants; facility rental; and other miscellaneous income.

Source: JLARC review of academy budgets.

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ing their local financial support from New River in favor of Piedmont. The regional academy whose revenue included the lowest percentage of State funds was the Northern Virginia Regional Criminal Justice Academy. While State funds comprise just 12 percent of its annual revenues, the Northern Virginia regional academy received the highest dollar allocation of the ten regional academies. The Northern Virginia regional academy also receives more financial support from its member agencies, and each agency pays a higher annual fee, than any of the other regional academies. The higher fees are due largely to the debt owed on the regional academy's building.

State funding has been fairly level since the early 1980s. State general funding for regional academies began in FY 1982. It remained level at approximately $966,000 until FY 1989, when two regional academies (Cardinal and Rappahannock) were added to the funding stream. At the same time, some additional funding was added for the original regional academies, bringing the total State funding to $1,283,625 in FY 1989. Reductions in the early 1990s brought the State appropriation down to $1,125,408 by FY 1995. The general fund appropriation has since grown slightly; for FY 1999 it is $1,188,970.

The most recent and important change affecting regional academy funding, which nearly doubled the amount of State funds provided to the regional academies, was approved by the 1997 General Assembly. This action established a special fund for the regional criminal justice training academies. Deposits into this fund come from a $1.00 fee attached to each conviction in misdemeanor, felony, and traffic cases statewide. Revenue from this source amounting to $1,245,708 was distributed in the first year (FY 1999) of the special fund on the basis of the three year average officer population.

With the new funding beginning to flow to the regional academies in FY 1999, State funding will increase from 21.7 percent to about 36 percent of regional academy funds. The FY 1999 distribution of special funds along with State general funds to each regional academy is shown in Table 2.

Localities Provide Most Funding

Localities provide financial support for regional academies through direct payment of fees, tuition, and dues, and by providing facilities and services necessary for the academies' operation. Localities supply most of the instructors, and donate other services to regional academies. Localities also cover any travel expenses incurred by their employees while attending training. Fees and tuition payments to regional academies by their member agencies represented 61.4 percent of the academies' total revenues in FY 1998, as was shown in Table 1. The methods of determining these fees are usually set in the regional academies' charters. Eight regional academies base the fee on the officer population served by the regional academies. Per officer fees in 1998 ranged from $150 to $275 per year for member agencies. Two regional academies levy membership fees on other bases. By paying membership fees, member agencies pur-

Table 2

Distribution of State Funds to Regional Academies
FY 1999

Regional Academy	General Funds	Special Funds	Total State Funds
Cardinal	$ 88,105	$ 92,310	$ 180,415
Central Shenandoah	186,660	195,567	382,227
Central Virginia	104,977	109,986	214,963
Crater	89,945	94,237	184,182
Hampton Roads	195,616	204,951	400,567
New River	83,072	87,036	170,108
Northern Virginia	171,802	180,000	351,802
Piedmont	56,237	58,921	115,158
Rappahannock	130,873	137,119	267,992
Southwest	81,683	85,581	167,264
Total	**$1,188,970**	**$1,245,708**	**$2,434,678**

Source: DCJS.

chase the opportunity for employees to attend in-service and most specialized and advanced training offered by the regional academy, not just entry level training.

Other revenue sources are also important to regional academies, accounting for 16.6 percent of their annual budgets in fiscal year 1998 (Figure 3). These sources primarily include tuition and fees paid by nonmember agencies when they send a student to the regional academy. Other revenues also include tuition and fees paid by nonmember agencies for personnel who attend training. At least two regional academies also include fees paid by individuals in pre-employment status who are permitted, after extensive background screening, to attend entry level training.

Donated Services Are Significant

Without donated services, such as volunteer instructors and borrowed facilities, the regional academies would be unlikely to meet the minimum State standards. Localities, other governmental entities, and the private sector provide specialized facilities as well as instructors to the regional academies, generally at little or no cost to the academy, and sometimes in exchange for training of their own personnel. If regional academies were required to pay for all the services and facilities used to provide training, the cost of training would be significantly higher than their budgets indicate.

Volunteer Instructors. The key resource at each regional academy is the faculty. Most instructors who teach basic law enforcement training at regional acad-

emies are supplied by local law enforcement agencies, and are full-time law enforcement officers. How these officers are assigned to the academies varies. One regional academy pays these instructors; another regional academy uses instructors who are on multi-year assignment to the academy from the local law enforcement agencies. The remaining eight regional academies use instructors who are typically away from their regular duties only long enough to teach their classes.

A review of the number of instructors used in basic law enforcement training taught in 1998 found that, at eight regional academies, between 39 and 151 instructors were required (Table 3). Some of these instructors were scheduled for as few as one or two hours on a specialized topic, while others assisted a lead instructor in team teaching situations. Teams of instructors are frequently used for such skills areas as firearms, driving, and defensive tactics. These instructors came from as many as 36 employing agencies, as Table 3 indicates. These employing agencies represent a broad cross-section of law enforcement, and include State agencies such as the Department of State Police and the Marine Resources Commission, as well as federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. State Department. In some instances, individuals such as judges, attorneys, and other specialists who were not affiliated with any member agency or law enforcement entity contributed their time to teaching basic training at a regional academy.

Table 3

Instructors Used to Provide Basic Law Enforcement Training by Academy
FY 1998

Regional Academy	Number of Instructors	Number of Agencies Represented
Cardinal	54	23
Central Virginia	151	27
Central Shenandoah	79	30
Crater	39	23
Hampton Roads*	N/A	N/A
New River	48	21
Northern Virginia**	N/A	N/A
Piedmont	52	10
Rappahannock	46	20
Southwest	68	36
	Average = 67	Average = 24

*Hampton Roads pays wages to law enforcement officers from their member agencies who instruct at the academy. In addition, one officer is loaned to the academy and another officer assigned long-term to the academy is paid a salary by Hampton Roads.
**Northern Virginia's member agencies assign officers to the academy for a three year period.

Source: JLARC review of Regional Academy data.

Two academies do not rely on volunteers for instructional support. Unlike the systems used at other regional academies, Northern Virginia's member agencies assign officers who are certified instructors to the academy for a three year period. Similarly, a member agency loans one officer to the Hampton Roads Regional Academy. Hampton Roads also pays another officer's salary while he or she is assigned to the academy. In addition, Hampton Roads Regional Academy pays wages to officers from its member agencies who instruct at the academy.

Borrowed Facilities. Many of the specialized facilities required for basic law enforcement training, such as firing ranges, fitness facilities, and driving tracks, are loaned or provided at low cost to the regional academies by a variety of public and private entities. While this practice enables the regional academies to control costs and meet minimum training standards, the academies may lack the capability to go beyond the minimum standards due to limitations of the borrowed facilities. Such borrowed facilities either were designed for another purpose and are adapted for use in law enforcement training, or in some instances constitute minimally adequate facilities.

An example is driver training. Several regional academies have negotiated with local raceway owners for the free or low-cost use of the raceways for driver training. These tracks are generally oval in shape and intended for high speed driving, but do not realistically represent the type of driving an officer may have to do in a typical pursuit situation. In other cases, driver training facilities are "ad hoc" arrangements using local parking lots or an abandoned air strip on a nearby military base. These flat paved surfaces can be used for minimal basic training, but are limited in simulating realistic training situations. In one case, a regional academy uses the runway of an operating airport, which must be closed to airplane traffic when in use by the academy. No regional academy has a driver training facility which permits realistic simulation of high speed pursuit driving. A state-of-the-art driver training facility has been cited by instructors, academy directors, and DCJS staff as one of the most significant needs that could improve law enforcement training. The need for a driver training facility is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

Firing ranges are another example of donated facilities. While some regional academies own and operate their own firing ranges, most regional academies are loaned the use of firing ranges by member agencies or by nearby military installations. While this practice permits the regional academy to control overall costs, it also constrains the type of training that can be conducted. For example, no regional academy has access to a firing range that permits practice with motion shooting – shooting at a target that moves to the side and away, resembling a fleeing perpetrator. Automated firearm simulators are helpful supplements to static firing at targets, but are not a fully acceptable substitute for motion shooting.

A variety of other services are contributed by other entities to help support regional academy training. Most of these services are provided at little or no cost to the regional academies, although the availability of these services varies greatly, contributing to varying levels and quality of training. The use of airport runways for driver

training, for example, sometimes requires advance clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration. Scheduling conflicts also arise between law enforcement academies and competing users of the facilities.

Total Cost of Training

Because of the extensive use of borrowed facilities and volunteer instructors, it is difficult to determine the total cost of basic law enforcement training. For the same reasons, tuition or fees charged to non-member agencies, or to individuals who attend basic training at certain regional academies, also fail to capture the full cost of training. Clearly the total cost exceeds the resources indicated in the regional training academies' budgets.

JLARC identified one regional academy that had recently calculated its approximate total costs:

> *The Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy calculated its direct costs of providing training. Using its proposed FY 1999 budget as a basis, plus an estimated average salary for instructors (who are on three-year assignment to the academy, although they remain on their home agency's payroll) academy staff determined that the cost per student for basic law enforcement training is $5,370. This amount excludes the students' salaries, fringe benefits, travel expenses, and equipment such as vehicles and firearms, which are the responsibility of their home agencies. It also excludes the cost of certain facilities such as firing ranges, the use of which is donated. The figure includes rent paid by the academy for use of a local raceway for driver training. The direct State share of the academy's budget devoted to basic training is approximately $422 or 8 percent of the $5,370 cost per student.*

Due to the generally higher cost of living in Northern Virginia, the cost per student for the Northern Virginia Academy may be somewhat higher than for other training academies. Directors and board chairmen at all regional academies emphasized, however, that the State's contribution is modest, yet crucial, to the continued provision of basic law enforcement training by the regional academies.

The State has just substantially increased its financial commitment to the regional academies. This new money was distributed to the regional academies for the first time during the course of this JLARC study. Regional directors told JLARC staff that the new funds will be used to address a variety of training needs, including facility and equipment upgrades. Proposals for State funding have been made recently by advocates of the independent criminal justice training academies. While a review of these proposals exceeds the scope of the current study, it would appear the reductions of funding for the regional academies would further limit the ability of the regional academies to provide quality training for criminal justice officers.

III. Regional Training Academy Programs

Virginia has established a framework of standards which cover criminal justice training, from curriculum and lesson plans to instructors, testing, and academy facilities. Some of these standards are extensive and specific, such as those concerning the core law enforcement curriculum. Other standards are so minimal as to provide little or no guidance. All criminal justice academies must train entry level students to meet the State's minimum training standards.

Training standards are in place for law enforcement officers, jailors or custodial officers, courthouse and courtroom security officers, civil process service officers, undercover investigative officers, and dispatchers. Criminal justice instructors are also covered by minimum training standards. This chapter examines the extent to which the regional academies provide for a consistent curriculum, whether instructors are adequate for the current training program, and whether testing is adequate to measure student's mastery of the basic law enforcement training program.

CURRICULUM AND COURSES

State and federal laws are constant across all local jurisdictions. As a consequence, the training of law enforcement officers requires a high degree of standardization and uniformity. Rules for searching and seizing evidence, for example, are set out in the U.S. Constitution and interpreted by the courts in a manner that does not vary among Virginia jurisdictions. On the other hand, officers enforce local ordinances and implement policing strategies tailored to local needs. Law enforcement training must be flexible and responsive to local requirements, as well as consistent with statutory and court-prescribed mandates.

Based on an analysis of the tasks performed by law enforcement officers, DCJS has established extensive and specific objectives to be covered in all entry level law enforcement training. Officers are taught and tested on 432 performance objectives. These objectives incorporate the law and sound police practice, and form the core of entry level law enforcement training.

Although these standards are extensive, JLARC staff found that many law enforcement officials believe the standards to be the minimum necessary to effectively function as a police officer, and were supportive of the standards. JLARC staff also found that entry level training varied widely in content and overall length. All regional academies appear to meet the current minimum State standards. Some regional academies provide much more training in certain areas than DCJS requires, while others appear to meet only the minimum requirements. JLARC staff also found that facilities such as driver training tracks are of widely varying quality, but are largely inadequate for officer training.

One result may be that new officers completing training at the regional academies have widely varying levels of exposure to and knowledge about core law enforcement topics. While standards for the core law enforcement curriculum will increase in 1999, it is likely that the consistency of what new officers learn will continue to vary.

Training Standards Are Extensive

Training standards adopted by DCJS are extensive and specific. There are 432 performance objectives on which each student must be tested prior to completing their training. DCJS standards require a minimum of 315 hours of classroom instruction and 60 hours of on-the-job field training for entry level law enforcement training. Beginning July 1, 1999, the classroom requirement increases to 480 hours. However, a transition period was provided for the implementation of the new standards. Between February 4, 1998, and June 30,1999, certified training academies may conduct training under the current performance objectives or use the new performance outcomes and training objectives. Academies may also conduct training during this transition period using a combination of both old and new standards. While all regional academies meet the current minimum requirements, they vary significantly in the amount of time allocated to specific topics and classes.

Performance Objectives. Topics to be covered in basic law enforcement training are indicated in the 432 DCJS performance objectives. These objectives include specific knowledge and skills grouped into 20 categories that make up the core curriculum. Table 4 lists the topics covered by the performance objectives and the number of objectives applicable to each topic. Performance objectives for these classes range from as few as three objectives for "Surveillance Techniques" to as many as 57 objectives for "Protection of Life" (which includes objectives pertaining to use of force and use of weapons) and 72 objectives for "Patrol Techniques."

Performance objectives constitute the core law enforcement curricula, according to DCJS standards. Performance objectives typically state specific activities or judgments which law enforcement officers are expected to perform in the course of their job. Exhibit 2 provides several examples of performance objectives. Performance objectives are often included almost word for word in daily lesson plans that instructors use when teaching.

Despite the large number of objectives to be covered in entry level training, most veteran officers and law enforcement officials interviewed during the study expressed the opinion to JLARC staff that the 432 objectives represent the bare minimum needed to function effectively as a police officer. As one chief of police stated, "'Basic training' means 'barely adequate' training — it's hard to get lower, and most police departments supplement the training after the new officers return from the academy."

The performance objectives were developed as a result of a comprehensive job task analysis completed by DCJS in 1997. Using a representative sample of law en-

Table 4

Core Curriculum Topics For All Law Enforcement Officers

Topic	Number of Performance Objectives
The Role of Law Enforcement	5
Law Enforcement Within the Criminal Justice System	4
Law Enforcement as a Profession	6
Protection of Life	57
Vehicle Operations	21
Communication	20
Interview and Interrogation Techniques	12
Arrest Procedures and Techniques	36
Patrol Techniques	72
Search, Seizure and Evidence	31
Basic Law	50
Criminal Investigation	21
Enforcement of Narcotics and Dangerous Drug Laws	15
Handling Juvenile Matters	13
Traffic Control and Enforcement	44
Custody Procedures	4
Crime Information and Communications Systems	4
Surveillance Techniques	3
Court System	8
Crime Prevention	6
Total Number of Performance Objectives	**432**

Source: DCJS Standards 6 VAC 20-20-21.

forcement officers and their supervisors, the analysis identified over 700 specific tasks performed by officers. The most consequential tasks were subsequently identified by the supervisors, and objectives were developed for each of these 432 important tasks. The objectives are incorporated into DCJS's regulatory standards.

Length of Training Varies

At all regional academies, the total number of hours of basic law enforcement training exceeded the minimum required by DCJS. Table 5 shows that, in 1998, all regional academies exceeded the State-required minimum of 315 hours of classroom training for basic law enforcement. Two regional academies provided more than double the required minimum number of hours.

Exhibit 2

Examples of Six Performance Objectives for Arrest Procedures and Techniques

8.1 Identify the pertinent provisions of the amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the impact each has upon a peace officer's duties in making arrests.

8.1.1 Identify the elements of "probable cause" to detain or investigate.

8.1.2 Given word-pictures or audio-visual presentations depicting instances where "probable cause" for police action may or may not exist, identify its presence or absence and reasons behind this decision.

8.2. List the elements that constitute an arrest

8.2.1 Describe the elements that distinguish an arrest from a brief investigatory detention

8.2.2 Describe the distinction between an arrest and a traffic stop.

Source: DCJS Performance Outcomes, Training Objectives, Criteria and Lesson Plan Guides for Compulsory Minimum Training for Law Enforcement Officers.

Table 5

Training Hours Required By Regional Academies Basic Law Enforcement Training, January - June 1998

Regional Academy	Number of Classroom Hours
Cardinal	600
Central	490
Central Shenandoah	520
Crater	560
Hampton Roads	511
New River	520
Northern Virginia	768
Piedmont	490
Rappahannock	632
Southwest	510
DCJS Requirement	**315***

*Changes to 480 classroom hours effective 7/1/99.

Note: Regional academies do not provide field training, so field training hours are not included on this table.
Source: JLARC review of data submitted by regional academies.

The length of entry level law enforcement training varies for several reasons. During 1998, most criminal justice academies began transitioning from the 315 hour requirement to the July 1, 1999, requirement of 480 classroom hours of training. The required hours shown in Table 5 reflect this transitional effort. By June 1998, all of the regional academies' basic programs taught more than the new 480 hour standard. According to DCJS, no regional academies have ever slipped below the minimum number of required hours.

The independent academies provide far more hours of basic law enforcement training than the regional academies. Table 6 indicates that all independent law enforcement academies required more than twice the minimum number of classroom hours set by the DCJS standard. Several require more than three times the number of hours mandated by DCJS.

The difference in training hours between the regional and independent academies primarily stems from the independents' emphasis on teaching agency- and jurisdiction-specific policies, such as local ordinances and community policing strategies, as part of basic training. Several directors of regional academies emphasized that for regional academy graduates, such specific policies should be taught during a new officer's field training.

Other reasons for the difference between regional and independent academies' requirements were identified by several regional directors. Independent academies

Table 6

Training Hours Required by Selected Independent Criminal Justice Training Academies

Basic Law Enforcement Training, 1998

	Classroom	Field Training	Total
Chesapeake	935	100	1,035
Chesterfield	1,120	320	1,440
Fairfax County	851	480	1,331
Henrico	1,160	160	1,320
Norfolk	960	480	1,440
Portsmouth	600	200	800
Richmond	1,010	280	1,290
Roanoke City	704	60	764
Virginia Beach	880	520	1,400
State Police	1,118	320	1,438
DCJS Requirement	**315***	**60***	**375***

*Changes to 480 classroom and 100 hours field training, for 580 total hours, effective 7/1/99.
Source: JLARC Survey.

may be better able to limit class sizes, which in turn may help control the logistics of managing practical exercises and scenarios. Equipment limitations can also affect the time required to do training.

Most regional academies have small agencies as members. Some small agencies have only a few law enforcement officers (44 local police departments have fewer than five officers), and find it difficult to have an officer away from duty for any reason. These agencies often favor meeting only the minimum training requirements in order to return the officer to duty as quickly as possible. Regional academy directors acknowledge the difficulty of striking a balance between the manpower needs of these small agencies and the need to provide a more-than-minimal level of training.

Other States. A review of basic or entry level law enforcement training in eight nearby states indicates that all had state mandated requirements for law enforcement officers, and all require law enforcement officers to have a specific number of hours of basic or entry level training. The number of required training hours ranges from 690 hours in West Virginia to 334 hours in South Carolina (Table 7). After the change to 480 classroom hours for Virginia takes effect on July 1, 1999, Virginia will rank sixth out of these nine states for basic or entry level training. Table 7 includes only academy-provided classroom hours, and does not include field training requirements in the various states.

Time Standard Should Be More Meaningful. One problem with the 315 and 480 hour classroom standards is that DCJS does not specify how the hours should be allocated to specific subjects or objectives. The number of hours spent on any given topic is at the individual academy's discretion.

Table 7

Required Hours of Basic Law Enforcement Classroom Training in 1998

State	Training Required
West Virginia	690
Maryland	635
Delaware	498
North Carolina	492
Kentucky	640
Tennessee	400
Georgia	384
South Carolina	334
Virginia	**315 hours***

*Changes to 480 classroom hours, effective 7/1/99.

Source: JLARC survey of other states.

DCJS developed the 315 hour classroom standard, as well as the new 480 hour standard, from an assessment by a focus group of instructors of the time required to cover the 432 performance objectives. According to DCJS, this assessment was based on this group of instructors' personal experience in teaching these subjects. A number of directors and instructors interviewed by JLARC staff stated that they would not know how long it would take to cover the new standards until they actually run an entry-level school.

A JLARC staff review of course offerings at the regional academies found considerable variation in the amount of time allocated to specific topics. Table 8 illustrates the variation for three basic law enforcement topics. These classes were included in entry-level law enforcement training during the first half of 1998.

JLARC staff found, for example, that the time spent by regional academies on basic search, seizure, and evidence classes ranged from eight hours to 32 hours. Time spent on basic interview and interrogation techniques ranged from four to 17 hours, depending on the regional academy. Time spent covering basic arrest procedures also varied, from as few as four hours to as many as 14 hours, although certain aspects of arrest procedures may also be covered in a separate class on basic law.

Such extensive variation suggests that, while all regional academies may meet the minimum standards, new officers completing training at the regional academies have widely varying levels of exposure to the core topics. Such variation may also indicate that the State standards are too minimal.

Table 8

Time Spent on Selected Topics at Regional Academies, 1998

	Classroom Hours		
Academy	Search, Seizure and Evidence	Interviewing and Interrogation	Arrest Procedures
Cardinal	15	4	7+
Central Shenandoah	32	4	8
Central	11	16	11
Crater	8	16	8
Hampton Roads	19	7	4
New River	22	7	8+
Northern Virginia	12	17	8
Piedmont	18	4	14
Rappahannock	23	8-12	(unclear)
Southwest	12	4	4

Source: JLARC review of academy data.

The reasons for widely differing amounts of time spent on a topic were suggested during interviews. Spending more time on a topic means the class can cover the subject more in-depth than a shorter class, and that more "hands-on" scenarios may be used to teach the subject at some academies. Several instructors stated that it simply takes them longer than other instructors to cover the required material. Regional academy directors also indicated that sheriffs or chiefs of police sometimes request more time be spent on a particular subject.

Some instructors interviewed by JLARC staff questioned the need for such wide variation in class time when the DCJS requirements, as well as the law upon which the requirements are based, are uniform. While class size and equipment and facility limitations account for some variation, these differences are not sufficient to cause the wide variations of time noted. Spending less time may be a problem because the subject may be only minimally addressed, and because students leave their basic training with widely varying levels of instruction.

> *One instructor wondered if it was possible to adequately cover search and seizure in eight hours, since it took him 14 hours to cover only a portion of the same topic.*

* * *

> *A regional academy director suggested that the amount of time spent on a topic may be more related to academy tradition than current needs. This director also noted that each regional academy has its own process for deciding how much time to spend on topics as well as its own process for assessing the mastery of the topic.*

* * *

> *Other instructors noted that some academies may be spending time on new developments in the field that are not covered by the DCJS requirements, such as the evolving need for police to know how to handle computer-based crimes.*

Students surveyed by JLARC staff also noted problems with the amount of time allotted to topics:

> The material covered appeared to be crammed due to the amount of material and the short period of time allotted to learn the material. If not for the Field Training Officer program, I don't think I could walk out of the academy and onto the street and be effective as a police officer.

* * *

> Far too many times the instructors were hampered by having a foolishly short period of time to present the basics, or embarrassed by having an inordinate amount of time to cover the material. I was more than a little disappointed in the lack of educational standards exhibited.

DCJS should determine the minimum time required to cover specific performance objectives, and use these times to establish the minimum total time requirement for entry level law enforcement training. This determination should be made on the basis of an analysis of the time actually spent by instructors to teach the material, and should take into account differences in class size, equipment and facilities, and related factors. Academies could still spend more time on any subject than required by DCJS, but the total number of hours would be more meaningful because it would be tied to a realistic assessment of the minimum time required to cover the material. The resulting calculation may be similar to that of West Virginia, which specifies the minimum number of hours required for each "module" within basic training as well as for all of basic training.

Technology and Training Time. DCJS and the regional academies also should examine technology-based training, which could eliminate the need to count classroom hours and instead focus on training outcomes. For example, a recent FBI study of "distance learning" found that a basic counter-intelligence curriculum could be conveyed to students much more quickly in a computerized interactive format than through a traditional classroom/lecture approach, with substantial and lasting results. Such technology may also facilitate the use of nationally recognized experts in various law enforcement topics. Portions of Virginia's basic law enforcement curriculum may be amenable to a similar approach.

Recommendation (2). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should systematically determine the appropriate minimum time needed to cover each of the topics in the core law enforcement curriculum. These times should be incorporated into guidelines for how many classroom hours should be required to teach each topic included in the core law enforcement curriculum. These guidelines should be based on actual time required by instructors covering the DCJS law enforcement performance objectives.**

Recommendation (3). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should evaluate the feasibility and attendant costs of "distance learning" and computerized approaches to learning the basic law enforcement curriculum. If such approaches appear cost effective, DCJS should implement them in phases for appropriate subjects.**

Driver Training

Driver training is an integral part of the basic law enforcement training curriculum as well as a law enforcement officer's job. All officers operate patrol vehicles

under a variety of conditions and circumstances. Although vehicle operation is a routine part of law enforcement, neither the regional academies nor the State has access to a driver training facility that permits simulation of the driving and road conditions normally encountered by officers.

Plans for a State Driver Training Facility. Planning for a State driver training facility began in the 1980s, but funding has never been provided. The construction of a public safety complex, which would include a state-of-the-art driver training facility, was initially proposed in 1987 by the Secretary of Transportation and Public Safety and supported by the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and the Virginia State Sheriff's Association. It was also recommended by the Criminal Justice Services Board in its 1987 report on the training delivery system in Virginia. In the late 1980s, preplanning and master plan studies were completed for a public safety complex on State-owned land in eastern Henrico County. The General Assembly appropriated funds to conduct architectural and engineering infrastructure design and construction studies, but the 1990 General Assembly postponed any funding for this project. Today, this land is no longer owned by the State.

As part of the earlier planning for a driver-training facility, the State identified a number of important components to make the facility suitable for training a broad range of public safety personnel, including all operators of emergency vehicles. The facility would be suitable for training in defensive driving and emergency driving techniques. According to the State's earlier planning, the main components of a facility should include:

- one and a half mile track for pursuit and high speed response training and to simulate interstate traffic;
- driver training building with classrooms and a building for vehicle maintenance;
- precision and serpentine courses;
- skid pan to develop skid recovery skills;
- urban tactical course to simulate urban/suburban roadways with traffic controls, surface variations, and mobile obstructions;
- rural emergency response course to simulate Virginia roadway conditions;
- control towers and observation areas to allow simultaneous observation of rural and urban tracks;
- fire vehicle shed for emergency standby for training incidents; and
- hazardous materials training area.

The cost of the driver training facility including the building and tower, the tracks, and a hazardous material training area was estimated in the 1990 plan to be $4.1 million. Chesterfield County is currently constructing a driver training facility for use by its law enforcement officers and other county emergency response personnel.

Driving is a vital part of a law enforcement officer's job. Driving in hazardous or risky situations is also routine. More than 90 percent of law enforcement officers participating in DCJS's recent job task analysis said that they operate a vehicle. Examples of vehicle use include the transport of property and evidence, transporting an arrestee, and high speed response driving in congested areas. In addition, more than 90 percent of respondents indicated that they operated a patrol vehicle on dirt or gravel and at night. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they engaged in high speed pursuit driving and 84 percent of the respondents indicated that they engaged in high speed response driving on the open road. When asked to rate the consequences of inadequate performance in these areas within the range of serious to disastrous (four to seven on the survey scale), supervisors rated the consequences of an inadequate performance in these areas as 5.8 and 5.6 respectively. The job task analysis listed 21 task statements that are related to driving and vehicle operation. All 21 of these tasks became part of the training objectives and lesson plan guides.

Current performance objectives require law enforcement officers to acquire the knowledge and skills to safely and legally operate a police vehicle under routine pursuit, and emergency conditions. Driver training for law enforcement typically includes:

- identifying factors to consider when engaging in high risk pursuit driving or emergency response driving,
- recovering from high speed response driving and pursuit driving off road at various speeds,
- identifying techniques of pursuit driving or emergency response driving on an open road,
- controlling a patrol vehicle on various road surfaces and conditions,
- demonstrating physical skills needed to operate a patrol vehicle, and
- establishing a stationary roadblock using a patrol vehicle.

Some of these activities can be simulated at the facilities now in use by regional academies, but pursuit driving, safe recovery from high speed pursuits, and the types of road surfaces and conditions available at existing driving facilities are not generally available. Consequently, new officers typically have little if any training in these situations prior to commencing work.

Facilities for Driver Training. Currently, driver training is conducted on runways or air strips, in parking lots, and at speedways. Regional academy students and instructors spend considerable time setting up these places for use as driving courses, and taking them down, and in traveling to and from the various sites. As a result, actual training time is reduced. In addition, such improvised or makeshift facilities do not accurately simulate the types of conditions, terrain, surfaces, or events that an officer may encounter while operating a vehicle.

A number of respondents to JLARC's survey of recent graduates of regional criminal justice training academies indicated that their academy's driver training facility was too small, the training was haphazard, or the training was not always conducted under safe conditions. Instructors at one academy told JLARC staff that the driver training facility was 40 minutes away from the academy and that they sometimes would have scheduling problems since it was a federal facility. Another regional academy instructor noted the downtime and confusion caused by frequently changing locations. Still another instructor told JLARC staff that the driver training facility was more than an hour and a half away from the academy.

Some training academies, including the State Police, use facilities at Fort Pickett. While the track is not state of the art and some renovations and improvements may be necessary, Fort Pickett has barracks and other features that allow training to be provided to officers from across the State. In addition, several courses have been set up to simulate rural and urban roadway environments.

A number of problems with current driver training facilities or lack thereof have been cited by academy board chairmen, academy directors, instructors, DCJS staff, Crime Commission staff, and the State Police.

> *One academy board chairman said that they have problems finding a place to do driver training. Currently, they have to do driver training about 30 miles away from the academy. This causes a lot of downtime.*
>
> * * *
>
> *Still another board chairman described driver training facilities at his academy and statewide as totally inadequate. "You need to have about four driver training facilities in the State," he said. "You just can't do driver training in a Sears parking lot."*
>
> * * *
>
> *DCJS staff stated that academies have inadequate driver training facilities, they borrow airports, parking lots, and racetracks, none of which are what they should be. Staff also noted that driver training is a problem and that no track currently in use can be used to train at the maximum posted speed limit.*

* * *

A director of a regional academy said that a key issue in improving basic training is the development of a driver training facility.

The director of the State Police academy and DCJS staff stated that the number one police training need in Virginia is a driver training facility. Driver training needs more attention. A State funded driver training facility should be developed and made available for use by regional criminal justice training academies.

Recommendation (4). **The General Assembly may wish to direct the Department of State Police (DSP) and the Department of Criminal Justice Services to study the feasibility of developing the driver training facility at Fort Pickett or another suitable location. The study should examine the feasibility of a long-term lease for the property or the use of land owned by the regional economic development authority. DCJS and DSP should report the findings of their study to the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees prior to the 2000 Session.**

REGIONAL ACADEMY INSTRUCTORS

Regional academies depend on part-time instructors, drawn from the cadre of more than 4,100 local officers who have been certified by DCJS to serve as instructors. Almost all instructors at regional academies are regular-duty law enforcement officers from agencies served by the academy. Most volunteer to teach. Students can benefit from instructors with current street-level experience who volunteer for the extra duties involved with teaching. Because the instructors are volunteers, however, inconsistency and continuity can become problems.

Good teaching skills develop with practice and over time. The State's instructor certification process, however, does not provide sufficient assurance of teaching skills. Instructor standards need to be updated and revised to specify expected levels of expertise of instructors.

Most Instructors Are Volunteers

Most of the instructors used by regional academies are regular-duty police officers in member agencies. Eight regional academies are almost totally dependent on member agencies permitting their officers to volunteer as instructors. One regional academy (Northern Virginia) has instructors assigned by member agencies on a full time multi-year basis to the academy, and another academy (Hampton Roads) pays officers from member agencies to serve as instructors.

There are significant benefits to the students of having instructors with fresh experience "on the street," and who will return to regular duty following their teaching assignment. A key benefit for students is the instructors' credibility: they are taught by an officer who has personally handled the situations and conducted the procedures that are being taught. Such instructors can discuss recent trends and events from first hand knowledge, as well as give students a sound sense of the judgment required to function effectively as a police officer. The agency supplying the instructor also may benefit from having an officer who is an acknowledged authority on a topic.

Instructors who will return to the street tend to be highly motivated to ensure that students understand and can demonstrate appropriate skills. As one instructor noted:

> When you're training people you know may be in a situation where they can save your own life some day, you're setting a high standard for what you want them to learn.

The JLARC survey of recent law enforcement graduates found that almost all (94 percent) said their regular instructors were knowledgeable about their topics and fully prepared to teach.

Unfortunately, there are significant problems in operating a training program while relying on volunteers to do the training. Volunteers are not always available to teach, since their primary duties are in their home jurisdiction and not at the academy. As officers win promotions, they may no longer have the time available to teach. One instructor told JLARC, "it may be difficult for the regional academy to get the best people because they are needed back at the department." A result is that sometimes a new instructor is used each time a course is taught, leading to problems with consistency and continuity.

Another problem is that some agencies may feel that using duty officers as instructors may compromise public safety. This is especially pertinent for smaller agencies which may have difficulty sparing any manpower. One board chair said that using duty officers for academy instructors drastically reduces the number of officers available to provide public safety in the community. He said he just did not want to pull officers off the street.

Another constraint is that part-time instructors may teach their own agency's policies and procedures, despite the regional character of the academy. Also, the students' employers may have different procedures. This was noted in several responses to the JLARC survey of recent graduates:

> The regional academy I attended taught many jurisdictions, so it was difficult to adapt when I went back to my department in regard to paperwork and policies of my department.

* * *

> The biggest problem I had with this regional academy was the different approaches to law enforcement. When there are some departments with 75-100 sworn officers and other departments with 3 officers, or comparing city police departments with county sheriffs' offices, you come up with several ideas of law enforcement. These separate ideas created conflict many times during the academy.

Selective recruitment of instructors, better support for advanced or specialized training, and more emphasis on the "best practices" of teaching could improve entry level training.

Instructor Certification Requirements Are Limited

DCJS standards require each criminal justice instructor to be certified before they can teach on their own. The standards do not require that criminal justice instructors pass a knowledge test in the topics they will teach, which Virginia requires for public school teachers. Key requirements for criminal justice instructors include:

- a high school diploma or GED;
- a minimum of two years' experience in a criminal justice agency;
- completion of 40 hours of instructor training, focused on how to make effective presentations; and
- an apprenticeship under the supervision of a certified instructor who has at least three years' experience as a certified instructor in the topic of the apprenticeship. During the apprenticeship, the new instructor must make a presentation of at least four hours (firearms instructors must also provide a range presentation lasting four hours).

Excluding the State Departments of Corrections and State Police, in October 1998 there were 4,152 instructors certified to teach general criminal justice topics, or 26 percent of all law enforcement officers statewide.

Instructor Training. The training requirement for law enforcement instructors is an important step in assuring the quality and consistency of teaching at the academies. The apprenticeship requirement to teach under the supervision of an experienced instructor serves as a primary check on the quality and expertise of the new instructor. Instructor training may be too narrowly focused, however, and more time may be required to adequately prepare instructors.

Instructor training focuses on preparing the new instructor to give lectures or do demonstrations in front of a class of students. While this format is a primary means of conveying information, this traditional approach often over-emphasizes the lecture method of teaching, and may not sufficiently encourage instructors to seek ways to

reinforce knowledge and skills through student involvement and participation. One of the most frequent concerns expressed by the recent graduates surveyed by JLARC staff was for more hands-on experiences. Regional directors acknowledged that students often ask for more experiential learning opportunities.

The 40 hour training requirement for instructors is similar to other states contacted by JLARC staff. Of the eight states contacted, all had a state certification process which required a set number of hours of exposure to teaching practices. Some states place more emphasis on instructor training. West Virginia, for example, requires up to 96 hours of instructor training, including 40 hours on lesson planning and making presentations, 40 hours on skill-based topics, and 16 hours on knowledge-based topics. West Virginia also requires instructors to have at least three years' experience as a law enforcement officer, and has an instructor mentoring system in place.

A serious concern about training was expressed by DCJS staff as well as by several regional academy directors and instructors. As described by DCJS staff, negligent training may occur when an instructor describes a technique or procedure, and then disavows the correct technique or procedure by saying, "Now, let me tell you how things really work," and then recounts anecdotes that display incorrect techniques and procedures. Although DCJS standards require instructor training to cover issues related to legal liability, the extent of emphasis on this aspect is not specified.

Few Standards for Expertise. In most subject areas, DCJS recognizes no specific standards or criteria to determine expertise. DCJS has identified only four instructor specialties: firearms, defensive tactics, driver training, and radar (which is not required for entry level law enforcement). DCJS has identified no criteria for determining an instructor's expertise in the remaining core curriculum topics, such as basic law or patrol techniques.

Advanced or specialized training is not required to become a certified general instructor. Such extra training appears to be rare among instructors. Of 16 instructors interviewed for this study, eleven said they acquired their expertise primarily by learning on the job. Only four said they had completed any specialized or advanced training within the prior two years. Specialized and advanced training is often costly, and neither regional academies nor local departments appear to consistently provide it. DCJS periodically offers specialized training on law enforcement topics, but instructors are not required to attend.

While there is room for judgment as to what constitutes expertise in some topics, there are also "best practices" in evidence at some regional academies. For example, one director indicated that he preferred to use instructors who had completed advanced or specialized training in the topic they would be teaching, and had personally developed an acceptable lesson plan for a class.

Exemptions. Certain persons used as instructors are exempted from the certification requirements, such as instructors who teach three hours or less, or individuals with professional or proficiency skills directly related to the subject matter.

This category includes members of the bar, medical profession, public administrators, and others. These exemptions need to be carefully monitored, however, as the following example indicates:

> *A police chief said that until recently, a criminal defense attorney taught classes in search, seizure, and evidence at the regional academy. The chief was upset that someone who makes their living by questioning police evidence in court should be teaching law enforcement officers how to collect evidence. He thought someone from the Commonwealth's Attorney's office would be more appropriate, because the prosecutor would actually be using the evidence.*

Emphasis needs to be given to establishing expertise in a topic prior to teaching the topic. Additionally, DCJS should issue guidance about the relevance of various specialties, to entry level law enforcement training.

Recommendation (5). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should require instructors to demonstrate expertise in a given subject prior to being certified to teach it. Passing a knowledge and skills test in the subject, advanced training, or extensive on-the-job experience should be required prior to certification as an instructor.**

Recommendation (6). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should develop guidelines on the use of personnel exempt from certification in entry level law enforcement training.**

Resources to Keep Instructors Current Are Inadequate

There appears to be a somewhat unstructured approach to keeping instructors current with recent developments in their field. While use of regular duty police officers as instructors provides a current events focus for students, the resource constraints of their home agencies may limit the instructors' abilities to keep up with the state of the art.

Several instructors indicated to JLARC staff that their primary means of remaining current with their topics was by reading magazines which they purchased at their own expense. Others said their primary means of staying current was through meeting other instructors prior to team teaching.

Regional academies sometimes provide financial assistance for instructors attending specialized training. For the most part, however, academy funding is limited, so they must rely on the instructors and their employing agencies to provide any specialized or advanced training. Even attending DCJS-sponsored training aimed at instructors requires travel expenses that may be unavailable for a local agency or regional academy.

Advanced training needs could be more systematically addressed. For example, DCJS could help improve the knowledge and credibility of law enforcement instructors by hosting regular sessions focused on the state of the art and the best practices in each major topic of the core law enforcement curriculum. Attendance by instructors could be required for re-certification. Additionally, DCJS should consider improving the exchange of information between regional academies and instructors. Use of the Internet and other computer-based resources could help.

Recommendation (7). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should sponsor periodic "Train the Trainer" classes on the core law enforcement curriculum. The focus should be on the recent developments in each topical area, and on the identification and dissemination of the best practices of law enforcement teaching. Instructors should be required to attend prior to re-certification.**

Recommendation (8). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should identify the best practices for instructor recruitment and encourage regional academies to implement them. DCJS should also consider using the Internet to facilitate the exchange of information such as lesson plans and teaching tips between instructors across academies.**

TESTING

Testing is a critical part of law enforcement training. Testing determines whether a student knows the performance objectives, and determines whether the student qualifies to become a law enforcement officer. DCJS standards require that:

> all approved training schools (i.e., academies) shall utilize testing procedures which indicate that every officer, prior to satisfactory completion of the training school, has met the requirements set forth in each performance objective. ... An officer may be tested and retested as may be necessary within the time limit of this chapter (i.e., within 12 months of hiring) and in accordance with each academy's written policy.

Standards also require that "each officer shall comply with the requirements of all the performance objectives." Consequently, students must score 100 percent correct on test items that derive from the DCJS performance objectives. Academies' testing policies generally allow a lower passing score, typically 70 to 75 percent, on test items covering non-mandated topics. Tests may be of various types, including a variety of practical demonstrations of skills which are graded by observers as well as the traditional paper-and-pencil test.

Each academy develops its own tests and administers and grades them based on the region's own preferences. There is no standardized test of knowledge, skills, and abilities for law enforcement officers.

Testing Policies Are Weak

The DCJS standard which permits any number of re-tests incorporates the philosophy that training is not intended to screen out weak performers, but instead aims to improve and enhance the students sent to training by the police chiefs and sheriffs. This "everyone is trainable" approach may undermine the credibility of the training and testing effort, and raises a concern about whether training and testing is conducted in a consistent manner for all students.

Re-testing. While DCJS standards place no limit on the number of re-tests, regional academies generally permit students three opportunities to answer test questions correctly, an initial test with two possible re-tests. The initial test may present the student with one or more questions on each performance objective.

There is significant variation in the re-tests. At some regional academies, the student is re-tested each time on the exact same question. This is particularly troublesome when a student is given three chances to get the same true/false question correct, as two regional academy directors indicated is their practice. In other instances, a new question on the topic is asked each time a re-test is administered. At other academies, on the third try, the student is permitted to write a paragraph covering the performance objective, or just to discuss the topic to the instructor's satisfaction. From the perspective of protecting against future liability, an essay-style response may better demonstrate what the student knows, and may be more defensible than multiple choice or true/false questions where the correct answer could be guessed.

One regional academy director said that although DCJS requires every student to pass each performance objective, this requirement has been interpreted quite differently among academies and among instructors. As an example, the director said if there are two questions on one performance objective and the student misses one and gets one correct, then the student has passed the objective. However, several instructors indicated that both answers would have to be correct in order to pass the objective. Another director questioned whether answering one multiple choice or true/false item correctly constituted sufficient evidence that the student had learned the material.

The intention behind testing, according to regional academy staff, is to make sure the student has learned the performance objectives. However, the willingness of some regional academies to adjust testing methods to accommodate a student's poor performance is troublesome, and indicates there are students who may perform at a substantially lower level than other students yet still complete their training. This concern was expressed by academy staff and others contacted during this study. For example, a regional academy director told JLARC staff:

> Tests are often too easy, students are given too many chances to take them, and the result is officers who hit the streets not fully prepared. I'm not sure we have systematized training in Virginia.

A field training officer responded to the JLARC survey by stating:

> Too many new officers complain of discrepancies in test questions. Academies should adhere to strict standards during pass/fail testing. Academy classes are burdened by students who do not meet standards but are allowed to continue class. Often I have been told that students are not expelled but kept in the class because of pressure from Sheriffs or Chiefs of Police. I understand that the cost of equipping and enrolling a student in law enforcement academies is great, but the liability of inadequate training is also great.

A director at another regional academy offered the view that he preferred to weed out poor performers at the academy instead of after they are on the street. Weak testing can allow persons with an inadequate knowledge of basic law and police procedures to nonetheless complete their training and be certified as law enforcement officers.

Differences in testing practices led some recent graduates, when surveyed by JLARC staff, to question the usefulness of testing. Of those responding to the survey, 28 percent said that tests did not reasonably indicate whether they had mastered the material. In comments, several recent graduates of regional academies indicated specific testing problems:

> Tests need to be tests and not memorization projects. Students should not have to have a review of the test with answers given just prior to taking the test and the student having to memorize the answers to pass the test.

* * *

> No one really cared about the tests if they flunked because you could always retake them.

* * *

> Some instructors had difficulty in preparing written test questions that related to the material that was taught. The grading process on written tests was unsatisfactory. Several times, numerous students provided the same exact answer, some were marked correct while others were marked wrong.

* * *

> The academic standards of the academy are basically non- existent, and standings are meaningless. The students are spoon-fed, requiring little or no preparation. Failure is an impossibility, short of being mentally handicapped. Final academic point standings are more a question of luck than a reflection of academic effort and achievement.

Comments such as these, from 1998 graduates of four different regional academies, point to serious weaknesses in testing and grading. Testing policies and practices need to be strengthened.

Test Development. Tests are used to determine whether a student understands each performance objective. Academies have complete discretion over testing. Consequently, academies differ in who prepares the tests and in the nature and content of the tests. Both paper-and-pencil tests and tests based on practical demonstrations of skills and abilities are used at the regional academies.

At some regional academies, the instructors who teach the courses do not participate in test development. This can lead to tests on items and topics not covered by the instructor. JLARC staff found that instructors have no role in test development at four academies. Instructors interviewed at these academies indicated they did not always see tests before they are administered, and so sometimes students may be tested on material not actually covered in class. Recent graduates from nine of the ten regional academies complained in the JLARC staff survey that tests did not indicate whether they had mastered the material. Several regional directors suggested the State move toward standardized testing as a step toward assuring a consistent level of knowledge, skills, and abilities among entry level law enforcement officers. A database of validated test items based on each performance objective would allow instructors to generate tests tailor made for the content that was covered in their course. Such a test would allow for reasonably reliable and valid interpretation of results, while at the same time not removing the instructor from this important part of the training process.

DCJS standards require that instructor training touch on "Criteria Testing and Test Construction," but do not indicate either the content or the time to be spent on the topic. Consequently, instructors are likely to have been exposed to widely varying amounts of attention to test development. Tests developed and administered by someone other than the classroom instructors may test not only the students' knowledge but also whether the instructors covered the intended topics, possibly penalizing students for the instructors' omissions.

Academies also have discretion over how tests are constructed, whether a test contains one question or many questions for each performance objective, the extent of validation of the test questions, and how the tests are graded. Some of the comments from recent graduates noted above point to problems in these areas.

Recommendation (9). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should take several steps to strengthen testing policies and practices at the**

regional academies. The number of re-tests should be limited and specified in standards. Re-testing should be as rigorous as initial tests. Effective testing methods should be identified and covered in instructor training. DCJS should also consider developing a database of validated test questions for use in law enforcement training. Tests could be developed either by DCJS for use at all academies, or the database could be made available to academies so they could construct their own tests using the validated questions. DCJS may want to consider hiring a testing expert in order to develop the database of validated questions.

Standardized Certification Test Should Be Considered

The mandate for this study directs JLARC staff to develop quantitative methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry level training. Measurement of this type can be provided by adopting a statewide standardized test which all entry level officers must pass prior to receiving their certification. Development of such a test is beyond the scope of the JLARC review, because it will require extensive expertise in a variety of criminal justice topics. A statewide certification exam for law enforcement would be similar in concept to other professional exams. A passing score would be required prior to certification as a law enforcement officer.

Although Virginia has emphasized standardization in law enforcement training, at key points in the training process such as testing, there are few if any standards and the academies have complete discretion. Although the core material to be covered is specified in standards, there is no uniform testing requirement at the end of entry level training. Instead, each academy determines whether a student has mastered the State's performance objectives.

A uniform test administered to all students who complete a basic law enforcement training program would help ensure that all students have mastered the core knowledge which is fundamental to the profession. Such a test could include hands-on scenarios and components designed to test skills in driving, firearms, and defensive tactics. All portions of the standard test could be administered by the academies or by a core of DCJS testers.

Virginia law requires that a person wishing to be licensed in a variety of professions must first pass a State administered or State approved test. A test is required prior to licensure or certification in the medical and legal professions, for example, as well as other professions including polygraph examiners, architects, real estate appraisers, funeral directors and embalmers, and cosmetologists. State regulations in each of these professions require completion of an educational program as well as a passing score on an examination. The responsibilities and liabilities of law enforcement officers at least equal if not exceed some of these professions.

Twenty five states have adopted a final examination requirement for purposes of certification, licensing, or assessing competency of law enforcement officers. North Carolina provides an example of how such testing is administered.

North Carolina has about 75 sites accredited for criminal justice training. Many of these sites are at community colleges. Like Virginia, North Carolina operates a decentralized system of criminal justice training. However, North Carolina has been using a statewide exam since 1979. North Carolina revised its original statewide exam in 1986, and is currently in the process of developing a new exam which will become effective July, 2000.

In order to collect data on student performance and to validate test questions, the original 1979 exam was administered for about one year without a mandatory passing requirement. Once the test was validated by a qualified statistician, the test was mandated statewide. When North Carolina wanted to update and revise the exam in 1986, subject matter experts from across the state were convened and submitted questions to the Criminal Justice Standards Division for inclusion in the new exam. Again, a test validation process was undertaken.

According to the Deputy Director of North Carolina's Criminal Justice Standards Division, a standard curriculum had been in place since 1973, so it only made sense to have a standard exam that corresponded to the curriculum. The current exam is based on the objectives outlined in the curriculum. Skill areas such as firearms, defensive tactics, and emergency vehicle operation are not tested on the statewide examination. According to the Deputy Director, most of the academies test these areas on a weekly basis.

North Carolina has three field representatives that administer the exam at each of the approximately 75 sites accredited for criminal justice training. Only after successful completion of the academy, is a recruit eligible to sit for the exam. Recruits must score a 70 percent on the exam and may only retest one time. About five percent of recruits fail the exam.

According to the Deputy Director, the exam weeds out unsuccessful candidates. However, recruits know that they must pass this exam in order to become a certified officer. As a result, they must remain focused throughout the academy.

The exam is mostly multiple choice. Grading is done by scanner, thereby decreasing staff time and effort. The use of automated testing also provides immediate feedback to the academies. The academies receive

a variety of information on pass/fail rates, student performance in subject areas or blocks of instruction, and the percentage of correct responses for each question. These reports are useful to the academies in evaluating student performance.

To date, the exam has not been challenged. The Criminal Justice Standards Division attributes this to rigorous test validation.

The ability to pass a standardized statewide test would show that entry level training in all academies provides a solid grounding in the fundamentals of the profession. As several regional directors noted, a standard test would help reduce the pressure some agencies feel to switch academies, "shopping for easier testing criteria." A standard test would also reduce the pressure reported by some directors from agencies wishing students to "move along" through training, and would provide some assurances that officers statewide have the same basic level of knowledge and abilities. A standard test would complement the high level of standardization already present in law enforcement training, and provide assurance that officers in all parts of the State were equally prepared for their jobs. Public safety would be improved by a standard testing and grading process.

Recommendation (10). **The General Assembly may wish to authorize the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop and administer a standardized test for certification of law enforcement officers statewide. The test should cover the core law enforcement curriculum. A passing score on this statewide test, together with completion of the required training, should be required prior to certification of law enforcement officers.**

IV. Post-Academy Training

After a law enforcement officer graduates from a training academy, the officer returns to his or her employing agency to begin applying what has been learned. Typically the new graduate leaves the academy and enters field training, a period of on-the-job training supervised by an experienced officer. The purpose of field training is for the new officer to learn local policies and procedures and become familiar with local officials and policing strategies. After field training is completed and the new officer is certified, the officer comes under the DCJS requirement for 40 hours of in-service training every two years. This in-service training may be provided by the officer's employing agency, by a regional or independent academy, or by a variety of other providers, including colleges and universities.

While the regional academies are not responsible for field training or in-service training, these are essential to officer competency. For this reason, the JLARC review examined whether field and in-service training are provided in a consistent fashion to academy graduates. JLARC staff found that the local option nature of field training has led to widely varying policies and practices. Most localities exceed the minimal requirements set by DCJS, but there is evidence that some local agencies do not provide the minimum of 60 hours of field training. DCJS has set no minimum qualifications for field training officers, although their duties require both the ability to instruct and the ability to assess and evaluate the new officer's performance. In addition, the in-service training requirement stops short of requiring officers to demonstrate continued competence in some basic law enforcement skills.

FIELD TRAINING

Field training is required to complete entry level law enforcement training. Field training typically takes place after the new officer completes training at a criminal justice academy, and is conducted by the officer's employing agency, not by an academy. Under the supervision of an experienced officer, the new officer is oriented to the employing agency's procedures and introduced to the local participants in the criminal justice process.

Field training is mainly a local-option process. At the completion of field training, the local agency applies to DCJS for certification for the new officer. DCJS standards require submission of a twelve-item checklist signed by the sheriff, chief or agency administrator certifying that the new officer has received a minimum of 60 hours of field training. The checklist items are shown in Exhibit 3. In July, 1999, the minimum requirement increases to 100 hours.

Similar to entry level training, DCJS has developed performance outcomes for field training. The 95 field training outcomes cover the basic procedures and agency policies which a law enforcement officer should know (Table 9). In contrast to entry

Exhibit 3

Field Training Activities

- Departmental Policies, Rules, and Regulations
- Departmental Procedures
  a. Reports and Communications
  b. Operations of Department
- Liaison with Commonwealth's Attorney, Judge, and Other Criminal Justice Agencies
- Local Ordinances
- Operation of Departmental and/or Law Enforcement Vehicle
- Familiarization and Execution of Legal Documents
- Familiarization of Territory and Facilities
- Familiarization with Magistrates and Courts
- Administrative Handling of Mental Cases
- Local Juvenile Procedures
- Structure of Local Government
- Detention Facility and Booking Procedures

Source: DCJS form B-13.

level training, however, there is no requirement that these outcomes be incorporated into field training. Nor is there a specific training program or certification requirement for field training officers. In addition, DCJS conducts only limited monitoring of field training. Several steps should be taken to strengthen field training.

Better Enforcement of Field Training Standards Is Needed

JLARC found that field training varies widely among local agencies. This occurs in part because of a lack of State requirements for this type of training. Because field training is a critical aspect of law enforcement training, it appears that some minimum standards would be appropriate.

Field Training Varies Widely. Most agencies surveyed provide substantially more field training than required by DCJS. Of the 80 field training officers responding to a JLARC survey, 40 percent indicated they provided more than 180 hours of field training, triple the minimum requirement. However, 17 percent said they provided less than the minimum requirement of 60 hours of field training.

Table 9

DCJS Performance Outcomes for Field Training

	Number of Outcomes
Department Policies, Procedures, Operations	46
Local Government Structure and Local Ordinances	6
Court Systems, Personnel, Functions, Locations	4
Resources and Referrals	3
Records and Documentation	9
Administrative Handling of Mental Cases	4
Local Juvenile Procedures	5
Detention Facilities and Booking Procedures	4
Facilities and Territory Familiarization	8
Miscellaneous	6
Total	**95**

Source: DCJS.

A review of 14 local field training policies submitted in response to the JLARC survey indicated that eleven local departments require 120 hours or more of field training – at least double the DCJS requirement. Several agencies' policies specify performance objectives for field training that are much more extensive than those adopted by DCJS. Three of the policies reviewed require new officers to pass written examinations on policies and procedures, and some agencies require extensive additional classroom training on local policies and supplemental topics such as cultural diversity.

In the JLARC survey of recent graduates of regional academies, several noted the importance of field training:

> My field training officer did an incredible job and went the extra mile to prepare me.

* * *

> Field training, far and above, was the most productive and educational part of the training experience.

* * *

> If not for the field training program, I don't think I could walk out of the academy and be effective as a police officer.

Some local agencies may not sufficiently enforce the 60 hour requirement. Seventeen percent of the field training officers responding to the JLARC survey indi-

cated they provided fewer than the required 60 hours of field training, and 26 percent of the new graduates surveyed said they had received less than 60 hours of field training. One recent graduate reported that his agency had no field training officer to work with him. Other respondents also pointed to problems with field training. For example, one stated, "I have been out of the academy for several months and I have not received any field training yet." Another recent graduate responded to a question about field training by saying, "My county had no Field Training Officer program on paper. It was basically a sit and ride program. My Field Training Officer slept 6 hours out of the 8 hour shift and the sheriff didn't care." A chairman of one regional academy board said some localities will "turn the new recruits loose" because they can't spare anyone to serve as field training officer.

DCJS monitors field training by reviewing the field training checklists submitted by local agencies, and by notifying local agencies when a new officer's time has expired for all training to be completed yet no field training checklist has been submitted. DCJS has three field coordinators who assist in resolving this delinquent paperwork. This level of monitoring has not been sufficient to ensure new officers receive at least 60 hours of required field training.

Because of the local option nature of field training, and because field training usually includes a component of new employee orientation which necessarily varies by locality, DCJS has been reluctant to impose requirements on the content of field training. While many local law enforcement agencies have taken significant initiative to provide extensive field training, there remain agencies which appear to do little, and which may not comply with the existing minimal requirements. The result is wide variation in field training, from agencies with almost no program to agencies which require as many as 672 hours of extensive and specific field training with daily written performance reports and locally administered tests.

This range suggests that, as was the case with regional academy training, beginning law enforcement officers have widely varying levels of exposure to and knowledge about the core topics of the profession. DCJS's field training requirements, consisting of 60 hours and a twelve-item checklist, are too minimal to provide effective structure or guidance for local agencies. While the 60 hour requirement is being increased to 100 hours on July 1, 1999, no similar increase is planned in the level of monitoring. Evidence that new officers have covered the DCJS field training performance objectives should be required prior to certification.

State Requirements for Field Training Officers Are Lacking. Field training is conducted in the local law enforcement agency by regular officers who are designated to serve as field training officers. DCJS requires no special training or certification to serve as a field training officer, so the local chief of police or sheriff may select field training officers as they see fit.

A key duty of field training officers is similar to that of the certified instructor: the evaluation of a new officer's knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance. Approval by the field training officer is often necessary for a new officer to move from probation-

ary to permanent employment status. Field training officers vary in their experience and training. Of those responding to the JLARC staff survey, 43 percent said they were not certified instructors, and 40 percent said they had not completed advanced training in any of the topics taught in entry level training.

With no State requirements or criteria about who may serve as a field training officer, many local agencies have established policies for field training officers. Some have not, however. One chairman of a regional academy board said his agency was "flying by the seat of our pants" in deciding which officers should be field training officers. He said he could not find any training program that would teach a police officer how to be a field training officer.

During the course of this study, JLARC staff reviewed the field training policies of 14 agencies. These policies typically specify a minimum number of years of experience that a field training officer must have. Six of the policies were merely checklists without requirements or criteria for the selection of field training officers. Only one of the 14 policies required certification as a general instructor, although most of the policies referred to the need for a field training officer to possess the verbal and teaching skills of an instructor. Daily and weekly written reports on the performance of the new officer are frequently required from field training officers. At a minimum, competence in the performance objectives developed by DCJS should be required.

Some local law enforcement agencies contacted by JLARC staff during this review indicated that, although they had no written policies on field training, they carefully selected knowledgeable veteran officers to serve as field training officers. Several regional academy directors also indicated that the smallest law enforcement agencies often had difficulty in providing a field training officer to work with a new officer, since their manpower resources were so limited.

Field training is a critical link in law enforcement training. By incorporating the DCJS field training performance objectives and outcomes into minimum standards for field training officers, the quality of field training statewide could be enhanced. The standards should include key elements of the general instructor curriculum, such as effective field teaching methods and the use of objective criteria to evaluate a new officer's performance.

Recommendation (11). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should require that field training conducted by local law enforcement agencies incorporate DCJS's field training performance objectives or outcomes. Certification from the local agency should indicate that each new officer is, at a minimum, competent in each of the field training objectives. DCJS should review the content of local field training to ensure that the objectives are being addressed.**

Recommendation (12). **The Department of Criminal Justice Services should establish a certification requirement for field training officers. The requirement should include key elements of the general instructor curricu-**

lum, such as effective field teaching methods and the use of objective criteria to evaluate a new officer's performance.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Virginia requires extensive training at the start of a law enforcement officer's career. The in-service requirement of 40 hours every two years after certification appears modest compared to the entry level requirements. As with field training, it is the responsibility of the employing agency and the individual officer to comply with this requirement, not the training academies, although the academies provide many in-service training opportunities. DCJS places only a few constraints on the training an officer may choose in order to fulfill the requirement. These constraints are that four hours must be in legal topics, and 36 hours may be on career development or electives, of which no more than eight hours may be firearms training.

This unstructured approach allows officers to develop specialties or take other training that may be required by their employing agency. It also means than an officer may never receive any training in essential skills and knowledge beyond what he or she learned at basic training. As a sheriff noted, "As it stands now, once you pass this stuff at the beginning of your career, you never need to demonstrate competence again." The sheriff advocated an in-service training emphasis on changes in the law.

Many law enforcement employees interviewed during this study expressed concerns similar to those the sheriff noted above. With changes to the Code of Virginia every year, court decisions, changes in technology, and changes in law enforcement techniques occurring routinely, waiting two years to update law enforcement officers may mean that information important to an officer's job may not be incorporated into the training program on a timely basis.

For example, regional directors and others frequently suggested that some type of driver training requirement should be included in in-service training. A driving instructor noted, for example, that officers typically drive a vehicle every day, but no driver training is required after an officer leaves basic training. This instructor cited the advent of anti-lock brakes, which require a method of emergency braking which is entirely different from the method used in vehicles equipped with conventional brakes. The instructor observed that the current approach to in-service training resulted in somewhat haphazard training of officers in the proper use of innovations such as anti-lock brakes.

Some in-service training, especially in high technology, has been difficult for regional academies to provide because several lack sufficient space in their buildings, and several lack adequate equipment. Reliance on donated equipment is a problem in computer technology, since donated computer equipment is often not state of the art. A number of law enforcement agencies in Virginia are moving to the use of on-board terminals or laptop computers in police vehicles. However, the regional academies lack

comparable equipment and are thus unable to provide training for these agencies. Several regional academies are using a portion of the new State funds to purchase computer equipment, which should help address this concern.

Because re-certification hinges on completion of the required 40 hours of in-service training every two years, DCJS monitors such training. DCJS notifies agencies of pending expirations of certifications, and follows up with agencies when officers exceed their two year limit without having submitted documentation of having received the 40 hours.

The requirements for in-service training should be changed to include some time every year on legal topics. Legal updates should be systematically distributed to all law enforcement agencies. DCJS should also make sure that as localities adopt new technology, officers receive adequate in-service training in them.

Recommendation (13). **The in-service training requirement should provide for annual updates on changes in the law. Consideration should also be given to requiring, perhaps every three to five years, refresher training in essential knowledge, such as basic law, and high-liability skills, such as driving and defensive tactics.**

CONCLUSION

Virginia has established extensive training requirements for criminal justice officers, and localities have established a network of academies to meet these requirements and to provide other criminal justice training. The State has taken important steps to improve training for law enforcement officers as well as the broader group of local criminal justice employees. Entry level law enforcement training requirements will increase in 1999, reflecting a recognition that more time needs to be spent on the fundamentals of the profession. State funding of the regional academies, which provide training to the majority of local officers, is doubling in the current fiscal year, but will nevertheless remain at about one-third of regional academies' budgets. The State share is even less when local in-kind contributions, such as instructors and facilities, are considered.

DCJS appears to have broad support in the law enforcement community for its approach to regulating training. This approach first identifies the most important and consequential activities of law enforcement through a job task analysis and then sets performance objectives based on that analysis. The approach also requires all new officers to demonstrate on tests that they have mastered the performance objectives. This is a reasonable framework, and DCJS has generally done a good job of implementing it.

There are several aspects of the training process which need improvement, however, chiefly involving instructors and testing. Instructors should have to demon-

strate their knowledge and skill level prior to being certified to teach. DCJS could offer instructor classes and provide more information to criminal justice instructors to help maintain their knowledge and skill levels.

A standard test for certification would provide a quantitative method for measuring competency and would ensure that all law enforcement officers statewide have mastered the essentials of the law enforcement curriculum. In addition, the field training component of entry level law enforcement training needs to be more carefully monitored, field training officers should receive training, and have certification requirements. The State also needs to determine whether there are enough regional training academies, and whether it may be time to curb extensive switching between the regional academies by local agencies. Overall efficiency would be improved by limiting the number of small regional academies, due to the substantial costs of operating a fully equipped academy. With these improvements, the consistency of law enforcement training as provided by the regional academies can be enhanced.

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Appendix A

House Joint Resolution No. 285
1998 Session

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study methods of developing and measuring the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training.

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the Commonwealth to assure the safety of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, qualified and well trained criminal justice officers are paramount to assuring the safety of the general public; and

WHEREAS, there are 10 regional criminal justice training academies which are responsible for training over 40 percent of criminal justice officers in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the 10 regional academies must select and train instructors, most of whom are volunteers drawn from the ranks of local criminal justice agencies; and

WHEREAS, each academy has different levels of resources to support the development and maintenance of criminal justice training programs and lesson plan materials; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth provides financial support to the regional academies through both General Fund and Special Training Fund Appropriations; and

WHEREAS, there is no mechanism in place to determine the quality and consistency of training delivered or measure the knowledge, skills or abilities level of a criminal justice officer completing entry-level training; and

WHEREAS, the Code of Virginia provides the Criminal Justice Services Board authority to promulgate regulations relating to the training of criminal justice officers and the certification of criminal justice academies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Criminal Justice Services, be directed to study methods of developing and measuring the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training; and develop quantitative methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry-level training.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1999 Session of the 1999 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Appendix B

Academy Participation and Officer Population By Criminal Justice Agency

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Abingdon P.D.	Southwest	17	0	17
Accomack Co. S.O.	Hampton Roads	22	42	64
Albemarle-Charlottesville Joint Sec. Com.	Central Shenandoah	0	79	79
Albemarle Co. P.D.	Central Shenandoah	93	1	94
Albemarle Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	4	14	18
Alberta P.D.	Central Virginia	1	0	1
Alexandria City S.O.	Northern Virginia	33	133	166
Alexandria P.D.	Northern Virginia	275	28	303
Alleghany Co. S.O.	Cardinal	15	18	33
Altavista P.D.	Central Virginia	10	5	15
Amelia Co. S.O.	Crater	11	13	24
Amherst Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	28	32	60
Amherst P.D.	Central Virginia	7	1	8
Appalachia P.D.	Southwest	6	1	7
Appomattox Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	14	15	29
Arlington Co. P.D.	Northern Virginia	344	48	392
Arlington Co. S.O.	Northern Virginia	4	192	196
Ashland P.D.	Crater	23	7	30
Augusta Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	48	45	93
Bath Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	8	12	20
Bedford Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	39	21	60
Bedford P.D.	Cardinal	22	7	29
Berryville P.D.	Central Shenandoah	8	0	8
Big Stone Gap P.D.	Southwest	16	1	17
Blacksburg P.D.	Cardinal	49	12	61
Blackstone P.D.	Central Virginia	12	6	18
Bland Co. S.O.	New River	9	10	19
Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority	Central Virginia	1	133	134
Bluefield P.D.	Southwest	12	5	17
Boones Mill P.D.	Cardinal	1	0	1
Botetourt Co. S.O.	Cardinal	36	32	68
Bowling Green P.D.	Rappahannock	3	0	3
Boydton P.D.	Central Virginia	1	0	1
Boykins P.D.	Crater	1	0	1
Bridgewater P.D.	Central Shenandoah	7	0	7
Bristol City S.O.	Southwest	3	47	50
Bristol P.D.	Southwest	61	11	72
Broadway P.D.	Central Shenandoah	4	0	4
Brodnax P.D.	Central Virginia		***	
Brookneal P.D.	Central Virginia	6	0	6

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Brunswick Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	15	25	40
Buchanan Co. S.O.	Southwest	28	18	46
Buckingham Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	12	10	22
Buena Vista P.D.	Central Virginia	13	8	21
Buena Vista S.O.	Central Shenandoah	0	4	4
Burkeville P.D.	Central Virginia	3	0	3
Campbell Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	37	16	53
Cape Charles P.D.	Hampton Roads	11	0	11
Caroline Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	25	11	36
Carroll Co. S.O.	New River	20	20	40
Cedar Bluff P.D.	Southwest	2	0	2
Central Virginia C.C.	Central Virginia	3	0	3
Central Virginia Regional Jail	Central Shenandoah	0	52	52
Charles City Co. S.O.	Crater	10	6	16
Charlotte Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	11	17	28
Charlottesville City S.O.	Central Shenandoah	2	6	8
Charlottesville P.D.	Central Shenandoah	109	0	109
Chase City P.D.	Central Virginia	8	5	13
Chatham P.D.	Piedmont	4	0	4
Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel P.D.	Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Police Acad.	39	0	39
Chesapeake City S.O.	Chesapeake Sheriff's Training Acad.	17	319	336
Chesapeake P.D.	Chesapeake Public Safety Acad.	342	40	382
Chesterfield Co. P.D.	Chesterfield Co. Police Acad.	391	72	463
Chesterfield Co. S.O.	Chesterfield Co. Sheriff's Training	11	154	165
Chilhowie P.D.	Southwest	7	0	7
Chincoteague P.D.	Hampton Roads	12	3	15
Christianburg P.D.	New River	37	9	46
Christopher Newport University P.D.	Hampton Roads	11	1	12
Clarke Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	12	11	23
Clarke/Fred/Winchester Regional Jail	Central Shenandoah	1	77	78
Clarksville P.D.	Central Virginia	10	1	11
Clifton Forge P.D.	Cardinal	9	7	16
Clifton Forge S.O.	Cardinal	2	6	8
Clinch Valley College P.D.	Southwest	6	0	6
Clinchco P.D.	Southwest	1	0	1
Clintwood P.D.	Southwest	3	0	3
Coeburn P.D.	Southwest	7	0	7
Colonial Beach P.D.	Rappahannock	11	3	14
Colonial Heights City S.O.	Crater	1	7	8
Colonial Heights P.D.	Chesterfield Co. Police Acad.	50	10	60
Courtland P.D.	Crater	1	0	1

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Covington P.D.	Cardinal	16	6	22
Craig Co. S.O.	Cardinal	7	7	14
Crewe P.D.	Central Virginia	5	1	6
Culpeper Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	24	47	71
Culpeper P.D.	Central Shenandoah	27	5	32
Cumberland Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	9	9	18
Damascus P.D.	Southwest	4	0	4
Danville Adult Detention Center	Central Virginia	0	29	29
Danville City S.O.	Piedmont	1	52	53
Danville P.D.	Piedmont	117	0	117
Dayton P.D.	Central Shenandoah	5	0	5
Dickenson Co. S.O.	Southwest	14	21	35
Dillwyn P.D.	Central Virginia	2	1	3
Dinwiddie Co. S.O.	Crater	21	34	55
Drakes Branch P.D.	Central Virginia	1	1	2
Dublin P.D.	New River	6	0	6
Dumfries P.D.	Rappahannock	12	0	12
Edinburg P.D.	Central Shenandoah	4	0	4
Elkton P.D.	Central Shenandoah	8	5	13
Emporia City S.O.	Crater	1	1	2
Emporia P.D.	Crater	23	6	29
Essex Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	20	12	32
Exmore P.D.	***	4	0	4
Fairfax City P.D.	Northern Virginia	58	9	67
Fairfax Co. P.D.	Fairfax Co. C.J.A.	1050	134	1184
Fairfax Co. S.O.	Fairfax Co. C.J.A.	8	455	463
Falls Church City S.O.	Northern Virginia	0	16	16
Falls Church P.D.	Northern Virginia	29	6	35
Farmville P.D.	Central Virginia	25	13	38
Fauquier Co. S.O.	Northern Virginia	78	38	116
Floyd Co. S.O.	New River	15	13	28
Fluvanna Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	14	7	21
Franklin Co. S.O.	Cardinal	42	41	83
Franklin P.D.	Crater	29	9	38
Frederick Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	77	13	90
Fredericksburg City S.O.	Rappahannock	2	8	10
Fredericksburg P.D.	Rappahannock	79	17	96
Fries P.D.	New River	1	0	1
Front Royal P.D.	Central Shenandoah	29	8	37
Galax P.D.	New River	23	11	34
Gate City P.D.	Southwest	4	0	4
Giles Co. S.O.	New River	11	27	38
Glade Spring P.D.	Southwest	6	0	6
Glasgow P.D.	Central Shenandoah	1	0	1
Glen Lyn P.D.	New River	1	0	1
Gloucester Co. S.O.	Hampton Roads	55	38	93

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Goochland Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	22	8	30
Gordonsville P.D.	Central Shenandoah	8	0	8
Grayson Co. S.O.	New River	15	14	29
Greene Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	21	9	30
Greensville Co. S.O.	Crater	11	10	21
Gretna P.D.	Piedmont	4	0	4
Grottoes P.D.	Central Shenandoah	7	0	7
Grundy P.D.	Southwest	7	0	7
Halifax Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	25	28	53
Halifax P.D.	Central Virginia	7	0	7
Hampton City S.O.	Hampton Roads	1	97	98
Hampton P.D.	Hampton Roads	258	41	299
Hampton Roads Regional Jail	Hampton Roads	1	224	225
Hanover Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	128	12	140
Harrisonburg P.D.	Central Shenandoah	61	12	73
Haymarket P.D.	Prince William Co. C.J.A.	2	0	2
Hayst P.D.	Southwest	2	0	2
Henrico Co. Division of Police	Henrico Co. Police Training Acad.	475	102	577
Henrico Co. S.O.	Henrico Co. S.O.Training Acad. & Crater	4	282	286
Henry Co. S.O.	Piedmont	75	35	110
Herndon P.D.	Fairfax Co. C.J.A.	43	7	50
Highland Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	8	11	19
Hillsville P.D.	New River	9	0	9
Honaker P.D.	Southwest	10	0	10
Hopewell City S.O.	Crater	6	3	9
Hopewell P.D.	Chesterfield Co. Police Acad.	46	7	53
Hurt P.D.	Central Virginia	4	0	4
Independence P.D.	New River	2	0	2
Isle of Wright Co. S.O.	Crater	18	11	29
J.Sargeant Reynolds C.C. P.D.	V.C.U. Police Acad.	10	0	10
James City Co. P.D.	Hampton Roads	56	0	56
James City Co. S.O.	Hampton Roads	2	5	7
James Madison University P.D.	Central Shenandoah	21	12	33
Jonesville P.D.	Southwest	6	0	6
Kenbridge P.D.	Central Virginia	7	0	7
Kilmarnock P.D.	Rappahannock	5	0	5
King & Queen Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	6	8	14
King George Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	24	15	39
King William Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	13	12	25
LaCrosse P.D.	Central Virginia	1	0	1
Lancaster Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	12	12	24
Lawrenceville P.D.	Central Virginia	6	0	6
Lebanon P.D.	Southwest	9	0	9

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Lee Co. S.O.	Southwest	23	19	42
Leesburg P.D.	Northern Virginia	47	6	53
Lexington P.D.	Central Shenandoah	15	0	15
Loudoun Co. S.O.	Northern Virginia	131	85	216
Louisa Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	19	16	35
Louisa P.D.	Central Shenandoah	3	0	3
Lunenburg Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	7	8	15
Luray P.D.	Central Shenandoah	15	1	16
Lynchburg City S.O.	Central Virginia	2	46	48
Lynchburg P.D.	Central Virginia	152	2	154
Madison Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	12	6	18
Manassas City P.D.	Northern Virginia	79	17	96
Manassas Park City P.D.	Northern Virginia	16	6	22
Marion P.D.	Southwest	16	5	21
Martinsville City Farm	Piedmont	0	14	14
Martinsville P.D.	Piedmont	50	0	50
Martinsville S.O.	Piedmont	2	46	48
Mary Washington College Police	Rappahannock	13	8	21
Mathews Co. S.O.	Hampton Roads	12	9	21
McKenney P.D.	Crater	1	0	1
Mecklenburg Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	30	43	73
Medical College of Hampton Roads P.D.	Hampton Roads	0	4	4
Middle Pennisula Security Center	Hampton Roads	0	41	41
Middleburg P.D.	Northern Virginia	4	0	4
Middlesex Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	9	5	14
Middletown P.D.	Central Shenandoah	5	0	5
Montgomery Co. S.O.	New River	52	46	98
Mount Jackson P.D.	Central Shenandoah	3	0	3
Narrows P.D.	Cardinal	6	0	6
Nelson Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	11	5	16
New Kent Co. S.O.	Crater	20	15	35
New Market P.D.	Central Shenandoah	7	0	7
New River Valley Regional Jail	New River	0	10	10
Newport News City Farm	Hampton Roads	0	48	48
Newport News City S.O.	Hampton Roads	2	151	153
Newport News P.D.	Hampton Roads	395	49	444
Newport News/ Williamsburg Airport P.D.	Hampton Roads	14	6	20
Norfolk City S.O.	Norfolk S.O. Training Acad.	6	428	434
Norfolk International Airport P.D.	Hampton Roads	32	9	41
Norfolk P.D.	Norfolk Police Acad.	693	0	693
Norfolk State University P.D.	Hampton Roads	33	7	40

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Northampton Co. S.O.	Hampton Roads	16	29	45
Northern Neck Regional Jail	Rappahannock	0	49	49
Northern Virginia C.C. P.D.	Rappahannock	25	0	25
Northumberland Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	11	12	23
Norton City S.O.	Southwest	0	2	2
Norton P.D.	Southwest	14	6	20
Nottoway Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	14	11	25
Occoquan P.D.	Prince William Co. C.J.A. & Fairfax Co. C.J.A.	3	0	3
Old Dominion University	Hampton Roads	38	14	52
Onancock P.D.	Hampton Roads	5	1	6
Onley P.D.	Hampton Roads	2	0	2
Orange Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	19	15	34
Orange P.D.	Rappahannock	16	0	16
Page Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	19	26	45
Pamunkey Regional Jail	Rappahannock	0	94	94
Parksley P.D.	Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Police Acad.	3	0	3
Patrick Co. S.O.	Piedmont	20	13	33
Pearisburg P.D.	New River	8	0	8
Pembroke P.D.	New River	4	0	4
Pennington Gap P.D.	Southwest	6	3	9
Petersburg City S.O.	Crater	0	89	89
Petersburg P.D.	Crater	118	19	137
Peumansend Creek Regional Jail	Rappahannock	0	11	11
Piedmont Regional Jail	Central Virginia	0	53	53
Pittsylvania Co. S.O.	Piedmont	55	41	96
Pocahontas P.D.	Southwest	4	0	4
Poquoson P.D.	Hampton Roads	30	6	36
Portsmouth P.D.	Hampton Roads	277	29	306
Portsmouth City S.O.	Portsmouth Sheriff's Training Acad.	13	143	156
Pound P.D.	Southwest	6	0	6
Powhatan Co. S.O.	Crater	19	9	28
Prince Edward Co. S.O.	Central Virginia	15	7	22
Prince George Co. S.O.	Crater	2	6	8
Prince George P.D.	Chesterfield Co. Police Acad.	45	7	52
Prince William Co. P.D.	Prince William Co. C.J.A.	337	20	357
Prince William Co. S.O.	Prince William Co. C.J.A.	67	1	68
Prince William-Manassas Detention Center	Rappahannock	0	171	171
Pulaski Co. S.O.	New River	33	35	68
Pulaski P.D.	New River	29	8	37
Purcellville P.D.	Northern Virginia	9	0	9
Quantico P.D.	Rappahannock & Prince William Co. C.J.A.	5	0	5

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Radford City S.O.	Cardinal	0	12	12
Radford P.D.	Cardinal	25	12	37
Radford University P.D.	New River	18	3	21
Rappahannock Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	11	10	21
Rappahannock Regional Jail	Rappahannock	0	95	95
Remington P.D.	Rappahannock	2	0	2
Rich Creek P.D.	New River	1	0	1
Richlands P.D.	Southwest	15	4	19
Richmond City S.O.	Richmond S.O. Training Center	7	379	386
Richmond Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	21	8	29
Richmond International Airport P.D.	Crater	18	14	32
Richmond P.D.	Richmond Police Acad.	706	56	762
Riverside Regional Jail	Crater	0	231	231
Roanoke City P.D.	Roanoke Police Acad.	252	0	252
Roanoke City S.O.	Cardinal	1	190	191
Roanoke Co. P.D.	Cardinal	108	23	131
Roanoke Co. S.O.	Cardinal	2	81	83
Rockbridge Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	21	8	29
Rockbridge Regional Jail	Central Shenandoah	0	29	29
Rockingham Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	40	81	121
Rocky Mount P.D.	Cardinal	11	0	11
Rural Retreat P.D.	New River	1	0	1
Russell Co. S.O.	Southwest	22	21	43
Saint Paul P.D.	Southwest	5	0	5
Salem City S.O.	Cardinal	1	8	9
Salem P.D.	Cardinal	60	13	73
Saltville P.D.	Southwest	8	0	8
Scott Co. S.O.	Southwest	20	23	43
Scottsville P.D.	Central Shenandoah	2	0	2
Shenandoah P.D.	Central Shenandoah	6	0	6
Shenandoah S.O.	Central Shenandoah	36	42	78
Smithfield P.D.	Hampton Roads	15	10	25
Smyth Co. S.O.	Southwest	15	33	48
South Boston P.D.	Central Virginia	28	8	36
South Hill P.D.	Central Virginia	18	12	30
Southampton Co. S.O.	Crater	22	53	75
Southside Regional Jail	Crater	0	16	16
Southwest Virginia C.C. P.D.	Southwest	5	0	5
Spotsylvania Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	84	45	129
Stafford Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	79	43	122
Stanley P.D.	Central Shenandoah	3	0	3
Staunton City S.O.	Central Shenandoah	1	5	6
Staunton P.D.	Central Shenandoah	50	12	62
Stephens City P.D.	Central Shenandoah	7	0	7
Strasburg P.D.	Central Shenandoah	9	1	10

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
Suffolk City S.O.	(varies)*	1	27	28
Suffolk P.D.	Chesapeake Public Safety Acad.	123	20	143
Surry Co. S.O.	Crater	13	13	26
Sussex Co. S.O.	Crater	15	24	39
Tangier P.D.	Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Police Acad.	1	0	1
Tappahannock P.D.	Rappahannock	10	0	10
Tazewell Co. S.O.	Southwest	23	32	55
Tazewell P.D.	Southwest	11	0	11
Thomas Nelson C.C.	Hampton Roads	7	2	9
Timberville P.D.	Central Shenandoah	2	0	2
University of Virginia P.D.	Central Shenandoah	59	0	59
Victoria P.D.	Central Virginia	4	0	4
Vienna P.D.	Fairfax Co. C.J.A. & Northern Virginia	37	6	43
Vinton P.D.	Cardinal	17	6	23
Virginia Beach City S.O.	Virginia Beach S.O. Training Acad.	3	306	309
Virginia Beach P.D.	Virginia Beach Police Acad.	712	85	797
Virginia Capitol P.D.	(varies)*	81	0	81
Virginia Commonwealth University P.D.	V.C.U. Police Acad.	65	26	91
Virginia Highlands C.C. P.D.	Southwest	3	0	3
Virginia Military Institute P.D.	Central Shenandoah	6	0	6
Virginia Pennisula Regional Jail	Hampton Roads	0	96	96
Virginia Polytechnic Institute P.D.	Cardinal	36	8	44
Virginia State Police	Virginia State Police Acad.	1762	111	1873
Virginia State University P.D.	Crater	16	1	17
Virginia Western C.C. P.D.	Cardinal	5	0	5
Warren Co. S.O.	Central Shenandoah	29	39	68
Warrenton P.D.	Rappahannock	23	3	26
Warsaw P.D.	Rappahannock	4	0	4
Washington Co. S.O.	Southwest	38	41	79
Washington Metro Area Transit P.D.	Northern Virginia	297	16	313
Waverly P.D.	Crater	8	5	13
Waynesboro City S.O.	Central Shenandoah	5	1	6
Waynesboro P.D.	Central Shenandoah	46	0	46
Weber City P.D.	Southwest	6	0	6
West Point P.D.	Rappahannock	6	7	13
Western Tidewater Regional Jail	Chesapeake & Norfolk S.O. Training Acads.	0	121	121
Westmoreland Co. S.O.	Rappahannock	23	6	29
White Stone P.D.	***	2	0	2

Department or Office	Academy	No. of Law Enforcement Officers	Other Personnel	Total
William & Mary College Campus P.D.	Hampton Roads	22	8	30
Williamsburg City S.O.	Hampton Roads	0	6	6
Williamsburg P.D.	Hampton Roads	34	14	48
Winchester City S.O.	Central Shenandoah	0	3	3
Winchester P.D.	Central Shenandoah	64	8	72
Wise Co. S.O.	Southwest	33	26	59
Wise P.D.	Southwest	11	0	11
Woodstock P.D.	Central Shenandoah	11	0	11
Wythe Co. S.O.	Southwest	35	27	62
Wytheville P.D.	New River	23	11	34
York Co. S.O.	Hampton Roads	71	17	88
Augusta Co. E.O.C.	Central Shenandoah	1	13	14
Campbell Co. Comm. Center	Central Virginia	0	11	11
Charlottesville/UVA/Albemarle E.O.C.	Central Shenandoah	0	50	50
Danville Emergency Services	Piedmont	0	14	14
Hanover Co. Comm. Dept.	Rappahannock	0	48	48
James City Central Dispatch	Hampton Roads	0	19	19
Lynchburg City Comm. Division	Central Virginia	0	19	19
Martinsville-Henry Co. Joint Dispatch Center	Piedmont	0	20	20
Mecklenburg Co. 9-1-1 Comm.	Central Virginia	0	16	16
Norfolk City Emergency Comm.	Norfolk Police Acad.	0	82	82
Orange Co. Emergency Comm.Center	Rappahannock	0	6	6
Pittsylvania Co. Comm.Center	Piedmont	0	7	7
Richmond Emergency Comm.	**	0	13	13
Roanoke Comm.Center	Cardinal	0	37	37
Warrenton/Fauquier Joint Comm. Center	Rappahannock	0	16	16
Waynesboro City Emergency Comm.	Central Shenandoah	0	20	20
York Co. Comm. Dept.	Hampton Roads	0	19	19

Key
C.C. : Community College
C.J.A.: Criminal Justice Academy
Comm.: Communications
E.O.C.: Emergency Operations Center
P.D. : Police Department
S.O. : Sheriff's Office

** Varies according to need*
*** Curriculum developed with Henrico & Chesterfield Counties*
**** Information not available*

Appendix C

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission

Survey of Regional Criminal Justice Academy Graduates

July 20, 1998

House Joint Resolution 285, adopted by the 1998 General Assembly, directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study methods of developing and measuring the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training. As part of this review JLARC has also been directed to develop methods for measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry-level training. The resolution requires JLARC to complete its work in time to report its findings prior to the 1999 General Assembly.

This survey requests information about your experience from the time you were hired by a law enforcement agency through your training at a regional academy, including your experience with field training. Specifically, you are asked to evaluate your overall training experience at the regional academy, your instructors at the academy, your field training program, and the facilities used during academy training. Your answers to the following questions will help us provide information to the General Assembly.

We hope that you will be frank in your responses. **All responses will be treated confidentially**. Information collected in these surveys will be reported in aggregate form only; no names will be used. In answering the survey, please give each question careful attention. The information gathered on this survey is important to our study, and we appreciate your time and effort. Please return the completed survey to JLARC in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by **August 5, 1998**.

If you have any questions about the survey, please direct them to Walt Smiley or Patricia Bishop at (804) 786-1258.

Respondent's Name: _____

Name of Regional Academy: _____

Dates attended for Basic Training: from ___/___/___ to ___/___/___
mm/ dd/ yy mm/ dd/ yy

Prior to Training

1. How long was it between the time you first reported for duty and the time you attended basic training for entry-level law enforcement officers?

No time elapsed; I reported directly to the academy	☐	18%
Less than a month	☐	22%
More than a month but less than six months	☐	35%
More than six months	☐	25%

2. Please indicate which of the following law enforcement activities you performed between being hired and attending basic training. *(Check all that apply)*

No duties performed prior to training	☐ 22.5%	Surveillance activities	☐ 24%	Search, seizure, evidence handling	☐ 24%
Crime prevention assistance	☐ 20%	Investigations/interrogations	☐ 18%	Arrests & custody	☐ 32%
Operated communications equipment	☐ 47%	Patrols	☐ 40%	Defensive tactics or use of force	☐ 27%
Operated police vehicles	☐ 49%	Juvenile cases	☐ 18%	Other duties (specify below)	☐ 37%
Surveillance activities	☐ 24%	Traffic control/enforcement	☐ 33%		

Other duties performed:

_____

_____

_____

3. When carrying out these duties, how often were you in the company of a certified law enforcement officer?

Always	☐	69%
Occasionally	☐	20%
Rarely	☐	6%
Never	☐	5%

Training at the Regional Academy

4. How many hours or weeks of academy training did you complete?

_____ hours OR _____weeks
(fill in only one blank)

Mean = 531
Median = 520
Mode = 480

5. In your opinion, are you satisfied that your basic training at the academy covered the essential topics needed to perform your duties as a law enforcement officer?

Fully Satisfied ☐ **28%**
Satisfied ☐ **64%**
Unsatisfied ☐ **7%**
Very Unsatisfied ☐ **1%**

6. Are there any topics that you feel *more* time should have been spent on at the academy?

Yes ☐ **78%**
No ☐ **22%**

If yes, please indicate the topic(s): _____

7. Are there any topics covered at the academy that you feel *less* time should have been spent on?

Yes ☐ **22%**
No ☐ **78%**

If yes, please indicate the topic(s):_____

8. How satisfied are you that the regular instructors were knowledgeable about the material and fully qualified to teach?

Fully Satisfied	☐	42%
Satisfied	☐	52%
Unsatisfied	☐	4%
Very Unsatisfied	☐	2%

9. How satisfied were you that, on a daily basis, the regular instructors were prepared and ready to teach?

Fully Satisfied	☐	40%
Satisfied	☐	59%
Unsatisfied	☐	1%
Very Unsatisfied	☐	0%

10. How frequently did you have a substitute instructor in a basic school class?

Daily	☐	2%
Weekly	☐	9%
2-3 times per month	☐	14%
Once a month	☐	19%
Less than once a month	☐	31%
Not at all	☐	25%

11. Did substitute instructors generally appear as qualified to teach the particular course as the regular instructors?

Substitutes seemed as qualified	☐	70%
Substitutes did not seem as qualified	☐	13%
Couldn't tell or don't know if substitutes were as qualified	☐	17%

12. Were classroom exercises and simulations generally comparable to what you have experienced, or expect to experience, now that you've been on the job a while?

Yes, they were generally comparable to real life ☐ 81%

No, they were not generally comparable to real life ☐ 19%

If no, which ones were least comparable to real life? _____

_____

13. In general, was the equipment used in courses at the academy similar to or equivalent to the equipment you are using on the job?

Academy equipment was generally similar ☐ 63%

Some academy equipment was similar, but some wasn't ☐ 33%

Academy equipment was generally not similar ☐ 4%

14. In your opinion, did the tests you took, whether paper-and-pencil or based on scenarios and simulations, reasonably indicate whether you had mastered the material?

Yes ☐ 67%

No ☐ 28%

Don't know ☐ 5%

15. What happened if you failed a test? *(Check all that apply)*

Received extra help from instructor or staff ☐ 27%

Could re-take it ☐ 56%

Had to repeat some or all of the course ☐ 11%

Don't know ☐ 1%

Never failed a test ☐ 41%

Other (specify): _____

Field Training

16. How many hours of field training did you complete? _____ hours

Mean = 321
Median = 231
Mode = 480

17. Did you have a Field Training Officer assigned to you?

Yes, from my employing agency ☐ 81%

Yes, from another agency ☐ 1%

Did not have a field training officer ☐ 18%

18. If you had a Field Training Officer, what was the Officer's name? Please also indicate the name of the locality and the agency or department the Officer was from.

Officer's name: _____

Officer's locality & agency: _____

19. During field training, how frequently were you accompanied by your Field Training Officer?

Always ☐ 69%

Most times ☐ 20%

Rarely ☐ 6%

Never ☐ 5%

20. Did your field training cover new topics not presented at the Academy, or did it
mostly include topics and activities you had already learned in basic school?

Mostly new topics ☐ 20%

Some new topics ☐ 58%

Mostly topics already covered ☐ 22%

21. If your field training covered mostly new topics, were these topics primarily specific or unique to your agency or jurisdiction?

Yes ☐ 81%

No ☐ 19%

If no, what were the topics? _____

_____

22. Were some topics covered in field training which you would recommend be incorporated into the regional academy's basic training?

Yes ☐ 27%

No ☐ 73%

If yes, what topics? _____

_____

Overall Assessment

23. How would you rate the overall quality of the following facilities in use at the regional training academy you attended?

	Excellent	*Good*	*Inadequate*	*Specify inadequacies:*
Classrooms	☐ 41%	☐ 48%	☐ 11%	_____
Firearms ranges	☐ 52%	☐ 42%	☐ 6%	_____
Firearms simulators	☐ 48%	☐ 40%	☐ 12%	_____
Driving track	☐ 48%	☐ 49%	☐ 3%	_____
Physical fitness facilities	☐ 20%	☐ 58%	☐ 22%	_____
Defensive tactics facilities	☐ 34%	☐ 56%	☐ 10%	_____

24. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the training you received at the regional academy?

Excellent	☐ 35%
Good	☐ 51%
Fair	☐ 13%
Poor	☐ 1%

25. Overall, how well do you feel the combination of academy and field training prepared you for the job of law enforcement officer?

Fully prepared	☐ 40%
Somewhat prepared	☐ 59%
Somewhat unprepared	☐ 1%
Unprepared	☐ 0%

26. Do you have any additional comments about your training?
(if necessary, continue comments on back of this page)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation and response. When finished, please place your completed survey form into the enclosed envelope and return to:

Patricia Bishop
JLARC
Suite 1100
General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA 23219

Appendix D

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission

Survey of Field Training Officers September 16, 1998

House Joint Resolution 285, adopted by the 1998 General Assembly, directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study methods of developing and measuring the quality, consistency, and standardization of regional criminal justice academy training. As part of this review JLARC has also been directed to assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal justice officers completing entry-level training. The resolution requires JLARC to complete its work in time to report its findings prior to the 1999 General Assembly.

This survey requests information about your experience as a field training officer. Specifically, you are asked to comment on your experience as a field training officer working with recent graduates of the regional training academy which serves your jurisdiction. Your answers to the following questions will help us provide information to the General Assembly.

We hope that you will be frank in your responses. **All responses will be treated confidentially**. Information collected in these surveys will be reported in aggregate form only; no names will be used. In answering the survey, please give each question careful attention. The information gathered on this survey is important to our study, and we appreciate your time and effort. Please return the completed survey to JLARC in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by **October 2, 1998.**

If you have any questions about the survey, please direct them to Walt Smiley or Patricia Bishop at (804) 786-1258.

Your Name: _____

Name of Local Agency: _____

Check one: I have ___ or have not ___ recently served as a Field Training Officer.
(If you have not recently served as a Field Training Officer, please stop here and return this survey to JLARC in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)

1. How long have you served as a law enforcement officer?

Mean = 10 years
Median = 8 years
Mode = 7 years

___ years, or since 19____

2. How long have you served as a field training officer?

Mean = 3.7 years
Median = 2 years
Mode = 1 year

___ years, or since 19____

3. Are you a certified instructor?

Yes ☐ 57.5%

No ☐ 42.5%

If yes, what courses or subjects do you teach?

_____

Have you taught at a law enforcement academy since January 1995?

Yes ☐ 45.5%

No ☐ 54.5%

4. Have you completed any advanced training in any of the topics taught in entry level basic law enforcement training?

Yes ☐ 60%

No ☐ 40%

If yes, what advanced training have you completed, and when did you complete it?

Topic	Year Completed
_____	19_____
_____	19_____

5. Please indicate the number of new officers for whom you have served as Field Training Officer since January 1995.

Mean = 4.7
Median = 4
Mode = 3

Number of officers: _____

6. Please estimate the number of hours of field training you provided to your most recently assigned new officer:

Mean = 183
Median = 160
Mode = 240

_____ hours

7. If your agency has policies or guidelines for field training, please attach a copy.

8. In your routine with a new officer, what do you typically cover? (Check all that apply)

Departmental policies and procedures	☐	99%
Local ordinances	☐	95%
Operation of vehicles and equipment	☐	98%
Familiarization with territory and facilities	☐	98%
Familiarization with magistrates and courts	☐	96%
Detention facilities and booking procedures	☐	98%
Other (please specify below)	☐	45%

Other: _____

9. Has your agency switched to a different regional academy since January 1995?

Yes	☐	5%
No	☐	92%
Don't Know	☐	3%

If yes, have you noticed any changes in the training received by new officers?

_____

10. Are you satisfied with the quality of training you've seen in graduates of the academy?

Very satisfied	☐	19%
Satisfied	☐	71%
Unsatisfied	☐	10%
Very unsatisfied	☐	0%

If you have been less than satisfied with the quality of academy training, what would you recommend to improve the training?

_____

_____

11. In general, have you found that new officers come out of the academy knowing most of what they need to be successful, or are there significant gaps which you've had to address?

Basically know what they need ☐ 86%

Often significant gaps ☐ 14%

If there were gaps in what the new officers knew, what topics were they in?

_____

What steps did you take to address them?

_____

12. Has the regional academy ever asked for your comments or feedback on basic training?

Yes ☐ 45%

No ☐ 51%

Don't Know ☐ 4%

13. Does your agency require new officers to pass a written or other test after they have left the academy?

Yes ☐ 30%

No ☐ 65%

Don't Know ☐ 5%

14. Should field training be improved in any way, or is it about right just as it is?

Should be improved	☐	32%
About right as it is now	☐	59%
Don't Know	☐	9%

If field training should be improved, are there specific changes you would recommend?

_____

_____

15. Are there any other comments about training that you wish to make?

_____

_____

This completes the survey. Thank you for your time and comments.

Please return the completed survey to JLARC in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by **October 2, 1998.**

Appendix E

Agency Responses

As part of an extensive data validation process, State agencies involved in a JLARC assessment effort are given the opportunity to comment on an exposure draft of the report. Appropriate technical corrections resulting from written comments have been made in this version of the report. Page references in the agency responses relate to an earlier exposure draft and may not correspond to page numbers in this version.

This appendix contains the response from the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

DEC 10 1998

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Criminal Justice Services

Joseph B. Benedetti
Director

805 East Broad Street, Tenth Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-4000
FAX (804) 371-8981
TDD (804) 386-8732

December 10, 1998

Mr. Phil A. Leone
Director
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee
Suite 1100
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

RE: JLARC Exposure Draft, Review of Regional Criminal Justice Training Academies

Dear Mr. Leone:

On behalf of the Department of Criminal Justice Services, we appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced "Exposure Draft."

The attachment will provide specific comments to the document as well as provide a brief review of the actions and perceptions of the Department of Criminal Justice Services based upon past considerations.

We wish to commend Mr. Walt Smiley and Patricia Bishop for their courtesy, cooperation, interest, thoroughness, and diligence in the development of this report.

We look forward to working with the Commission and the General Assembly to forward objectives which relate to the improvement of criminal justice training in Virginia as a result of direction provided in the 1999 session.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joseph B. Benedetti
Director

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Criminal Justice Service Board • Committee on Training • Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee
Advisory Committee to Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act Programs
Private Security Services Advisory Board • Criminal Justice Information Systems Committee

Comments Pertaining to the Exposure Draft
Review of Regional Criminal Justice Training Academies

Page iii, line 4, "relay" should be "rely".

Page iv, line 8, "19870s" should be "1980s".

Page v., line 6, recommend adding the language "a minimum of" in front of "480 hours".

Page 20, line 5, line 6, need to have verb agreement. Should be "have" as opposed to "has."

Page 21, lines 1 through 6, several law enforcement agencies from the Lord Fairfax Planning District have submitted letters of intent to withdraw from the existing regional academy. They have indicated that they have entered into a temporary contract with another regional academy and are exploring their options which includes the formation of a new regional academy.

Page 53, bullet notes describing the components of the driver training facility, omitted any reference to the 1 1/2 mile track for pursuit and high speed response training and to simulate interstate traffic.

Recommendation 1: The General Assembly may wish to direct the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop strategies to stabilize the membership of regional criminal justice academies including financial incentives and to report on the feasibility of establishing permanent boundaries for the training academies. DCJS should report its findings prior to the 2000 Session.

In 1987, the Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB)established a "Select Review Committee" to study this issue and provide recommendations. In 1989, a new committee was formed called the "Liaison Committee" which was composed of selected CJSB members and the Regional Academy Board Chairmen. This group also reviewed this issue. Two issues make this a difficult to resolve. First, the obligation of the chief of police, sheriff, or agency administrator to determine the sufficiency of training for personnel; and second, the obligation of the chief of police, sheriff, or agency administrator to spend funds allocated to training in the most judicious manner. As a result of the relationship that DCJS has with the Committee on Training and the Liaison Committee of the CJSB, we would recommend an independent source conduct this study and make appropriate recommendations

Recommendation 2: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should systematically determine the appropriate minimum time needed to cover each of the topics in the core entry-level law enforcement curriculum. These times should be incorporated into guidelines for how many classroom hours should be required to

teach each topic included in the core law enforcement curriculum. These guidelines should be based on actual time required by instructors covering the DCJS performance objectives.

This issue relates to establishing consistency through the use of time. All minimum training programs prior to 1984 used this premise. Two issues arise. First, while time was required at a minimum for each topic, the use of the time was not always maximized appropriately by the instructor. Additionally, efforts were made on the part of certain law enforcement administrators to limit the academies to the minimum number of hours required by the rules.

Second, performance-based training relies upon the mastery of the performance objective and criteria. If a task is to performed, it must be performed at a minimum acceptable level. DCJS staff has proposed the establishment of a group of personnel employed by DCJS to develop model lesson plans which would indicate the number of hours required to properly instruct the topic, develop necessary audio-visuals to support the model lesson plans, and develop test bank questions to administer to determine subject matter proficiency. This effort has not been successful and budget amendments not forwarded for legislative consideration.

Recommendation 3: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should evaluate the feasibility and attendant costs of "distance learning" and computerized approaches to learning the basic law enforcement curriculum. If such approaches appear cost effective, DCJS should implement them in phases for appropriate subjects.

DCJS has evaluated distance learning for basic correctional officer training and for other law enforcement training needs. Initial findings have indicated that the costs and resources to develop this type of program would be prohibitive under our current budget and staff structure. The States of South Carolina and California do have a production studios which offer in-service training in a distance learning mode. No state currently offers entry-level training is a distance learning mode.

The State of Michigan contracted to have a computer based abbreviated entry-level auxiliary law enforcement officer training program developed for statewide use. The State of Mississippi is considering the same option. Initial review indicates that it is expensive in its development and still requires needed resources to develop and personnel to administer. Additionally, the inconsistency and availability of computer hardware by local agencies may present a problem for universal application. DCJS is currently working with the National Guard in exploring the use of their system for distance learning. This matter is still under review for consideration.

Recommendation 4: The General Assembly may wish to direct the State Police and the Department of Criminal Justice Services to study the feasibility of developing the driver training facility at Fort Pickett or another suitable location. The study

should examine the feasibility of a long-term lease for the property or the use of land owned by the regional economic development authority. DCJS should report the findings of its study to the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees prior to the 2000 session.

DCJS supports this initiative as is exhibited by our pursuit of the Elko track for development in the 1980's and early 1990's. DCJS and the Criminal Justice Services Board actively pursued the development of a driver training facility. The design work for the facility has been done in conjunction of the study of the ELKO tract in eastern Henrico County. Funding was initially provided for infrastructure and engineering studies. Further funding ceased and the project was terminated.

Recommendation 5: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should require instructors to demonstrate expertise in a given subject prior to being certified to teach it. Passing a knowledge and skills test in the subject, advanced training, or extensive on-the-job experience should be required prior to certification as an instructor.

Individual subject matter certification was initially considered in the development of the original rules pertaining to the certification of instructors. States contacted which administer this type of certification program indicated that it involves significant resources to administer and track certification conducted in this manner and may create significant costs. The advisory committee composed of representatives of the academy directors, chiefs of police and sheriffs determined that, with the exception of the high liability areas such as firearms, defensive tactics, etc. it would be a better course of action to require the attendance of a general instructor school which provide the fundamentals of instruction and allow the academies to determine the most qualified officers and persons to provide the instruction upon certification.

Proposals have been previously forwarded by DCJS staff which recommend the formation of full-time instructional cadre to deliver entry-level law enforcement training in the manner in which jail training is currently delivered by the "Jails Training Staff" of DCJS. This proposition was forwarded by the Crime Commission in one of its studies of criminal justice training in Virginia. However, this proposal has met with no success.

Recommendation 6: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should develop guidelines on the use of personnel exempt from certification in entry-level law enforcement training.

While initially discussed as part of the formulation of the original instructor certification rules, no action was taken in this matter by the original advisory committee used to formulate the rules for consideration, nor was it recommended during the rule making process

Recommendation 7: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should sponsor periodic "Train-the-Trainer" classes on the core law enforcement curriculum. The focus should be on the recent developments in each topical area, and on the identification and dissemination of the best practices of law enforcement teaching. Instructors should be required to attend prior to certification.

In the past, DCJS has offered general "Instructor Development" courses which utilized personnel of the FBI Academy in Quantico as instructors. Additionally, courses have been provided to update individuals in legal instructor development, firearms instruction update, and advanced defensive tactics. DCJS has also sponsored courses to train instructors in areas involving "Child Sexual Abuse, Cultural Diversity, and Field Training Officers" and will be conducting training to develop instructors in "Alzheimers" training in March of 1999.

Generally, such expertise is not available "in house" and instructors qualified to teach must be contracted or volunteered to DCJS to assist in the development and implementation of such training programs. Current resources are not been available to continue these programs on a consistent basis.

Recommendation 8: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should identify best practices for instructor recruitment and encourage regional academies to implement them. DCJS should also consider using the internet to facilitate the exchange of information such as lesson plans and teaching tips between instructors across academies.

The issue of identifying best practices for instructor recruitment has not been addressed by DCJS in the past. DCJS has encouraged the exchange of information and resources in its association with the Virginia Training Directors Association.

Recommendation 9: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should take several steps to strengthen testing policies and practices of the regional academies. The number of re-tests should be limited and specified in the standards. Re-testing should be as rigorous as initial tests. Effective testing methods should be identified and covered in instructor training. DCJS should also consider developing a database of validated test questions for use in law enforcement training. Tests could be developed either by DCJS for use at all academies, or the database could be made available to academies so they could construct their own tests using the validated questions. DCJS may want to consider hiring a testing expert to develop the database of validated questions.

DCJS has consistently supported the development of a test bank. Efforts are currently underway to do so with the new requirements of entry-level law enforcement training. However, resources do not currently exist to validate such questions and continuously maintain a databank. Current efforts to purchase a training management software system

for the academies will include a method for test banking and random test/re-test construction.

Recommendation 10: The General Assembly may wish to authorize the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop and administer a standardized test for certification of law enforcement officers statewide. The test should cover the core law enforcement curriculum. A passing score on this statewide test, together with completion of the required training, should be required prior to certification of law enforcement officers.

Staff of the Department has provided recommendations for the budget to develop a statewide competency examination in the past with no success. Resources will be needed for a testing specialist, which could be used in conjunction with recommendation 9, and staff to implement, score, and report the results of the test.

Recommendation 11: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should require that field training conducted by local law enforcement agencies incorporate DCJS's field training performance objectives or outcomes. Certification from the local agency should indicate that each new officer is, at a minimum, competent in each of the field training objectives. DCJS should review the content of local field training to ensure that the objectives are being addressed.

A model field training program for law enforcement officers was developed and distributed in 1993. Current requirements were a result of recommendations from the Job Task advisory committees and comments received during the comment periods required by the Administrative Process Act. The greatest impact appears to be on the smaller law enforcement agencies.

Recommendation 12: The Department of Criminal Justice Services should establish a certification requirement for field training officers. The requirement should include key elements of the general instructor curriculum, such as effective field teaching methods and the use of objective criteria to evaluate a new officer's performance.

No comment necessary.

Recommendation 13: The in-service training requirement should provide for annual updates on changes in the law. Consideration should also be given to requiring, perhaps every three to five years, refresher training in essential knowledge, such as basic law and high liability skills such as driving and defensive tactics.

No comment necessary.

General Notes:

Current law provides the authority to the Committee on Training (COT) through the Administrative Process Act to promulgate rules pertaining to entry-level and in-service law enforcement training. While the Department may forward suggestions for implementation, final adoption authority rests with the Criminal Justice Services Board.

Putting the impetus on the Department to develop several of these recommendations may place the Department in a direct adversarial relationship with its constituent groups. However, either working with and through the COT with specific directions from the legislature, or passed legislative directives will help alleviate this potential problem.

While recommendations contained within the body of the report are fundamentally solid, they also require considerable resources and money which must accompany their development and implementation.

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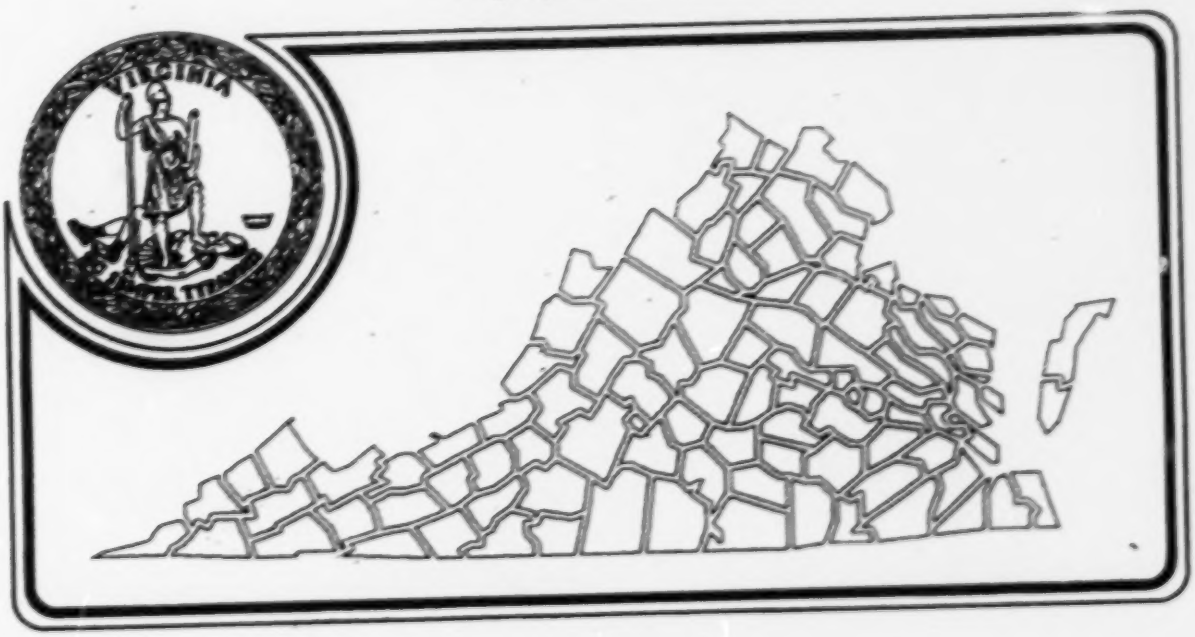
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